THE MAURITANIAN

Screen Story by
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Screenplay by
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Based on
'GUANTANAMO DIARY'
By Mohamedou Ould Slahi

January, 2020
OVER BLACK:

The rhythmic percussion of waves lapping on the shore...

EXT. SLAHI HOME - BEACH - DUSK

SEARCH PARTIES stream out of a large WEDDING TENT. Flashlights in hand, they comb the grounds of a modest beach front home, but the music and laughter tell us this is all fun and games. The WEDDING PARTY hunt for the bride, a Mauritian tradition. Their fine clothes and high spirits lend a surreal decadence to the pastoral scene.

Away from the Revelers, FIND a lone figure drifting across a scrub of beach. This is MOHAMEDOU OULD SLAHI (31).

His white daraa billows in the coastal wind. A permanent grin on his face, the lightness of his footsteps give the impression that he could be carried away on the breeze.


The sun sets on the Atlantic Ocean beyond him, but Mohamedou’s focus is on a trail of footprints in the sand. They lead to a brightly colored skiff beached on the shore. Mohamedou perches against the boat, pleased with himself.

(NOTE: ALL NON-ENGLISH DIALOGUE WILL BE WRITTEN IN ITALICS.)

MOHAMEDOU
(playful, in Arabic)
*The tide’s coming in. Stay here much longer, you won’t just be hiding, you’ll be gone for good.*

MOHAMEDOU’S NIECE (FROM UNDER BOAT)
*Go away, Uncle! You’re not supposed to be playing, you’re too old.*

Mohamedou peers inside the skiff, finds his NIECE (20) hiding. Dressed in a black bridal lakhel, dripping with gold jewelry, her hands painted with henna.

MOHAMEDOU
*I’m not too old to shout, tell your groom where to find you!*

She clicks her tongue at him. He laughs it off, leaves her to her hiding place.
INT. SLAHI HOME - WEDDING TENT - NIGHT

The noisy, happy wedding now in full flow. Mohamedou moves through the crowd, exchanging embraces with the MALE half of the wedding party. Across the tent, the FEMALE half dance around the bride (his Niece). The BAND lays down rolling traditional tunes on a lute and electric guitar.

MALE WEDDING GUEST 1               MOHAMEDOU
Mashallah, Mohamedou, Germany         It’s been too long, Uncle.
looks good on you.

MALE WEDDING GUEST 2               MOHAMEDOU (CONT'D)
How much for a liter of petrol there?  I don’t know, I ride the U-bahn.

A myriad of MEN (young & old) jockey to talk to Mohamedou.

MALE WEDDING GUEST 3               MOHAMEDOU (CONT'D)
Can you help with my nephew’s visa? His studies, he’s little Einstein, like you.
tomorrow, I’ll be here.

MALE WEDDING GUEST 4               MOHAMEDOU (CONT'D)
You go to the Bundesliga matches? Is Kouffour as fast as he looks on TV?
(Faster even.)(stepping away)

Mohamedou tracks down a TEA BOY, snags a glass from his tray as he passes. Mohamedou sips the hot green tea, winces.

MOHAMEDOU (CONT'D)
Are you serious? This isn’t enough sugar.

Mohamedou steps after the Tea Boy, but is intercepted by --

A MALE WEDDING GUEST huddles close to him, whispers in his ear. Concern washes over Mohamedou, his eyes dart to:

The FAMILY HOME beyond the wedding tent. A MAN in a western suit waits ominously by the back door. This is DEDDAHI (50s), the head of Mauritania’s Intelligence Service. Nonchalantly, he cleans burnt tobacco from his pipe.

EXT. SLAHI HOME/STREET - MOMENTS LATER

Mohamedou emerges from the house to find:

His terrified MOTHER standing near Deddahi and two more UNIFORMED OFFICERS. Their two Black Mercedes sedans block the narrow, dirt road. A few WEDDING GUESTS look on with concern; everyone knows who Deddahi is.

MOHAMEDOU

Mama, go inside.
MOHAMEDOU'S MOTHER
Is this about the new satellite
dish you put up?

MOHAMEDOU
No. It’s nothing.

MOHAMEDOU'S MOTHER
If it’s nothing, they can come back
tomorrow.

MOHAMEDOU
Then tomorrow will be ruined too.
Please, let us talk.

Deddahi takes a puff at his pipe and blows the smoke away
from the face of the older woman. Mohamedou gently ushers his
Mother back towards the house. Then turns to Deddahi --

MOHAMEDOU (CONT'D)
How many times can I say the same
thing? I don’t know where Mahfouz
is. I doubt Bin Laden even knows.

DEDDAAHI
After these New York attacks, the
Americans, they’re going crazy.

MOHAMEDOU
Yeah, they put Mahfouz’s bounty up
to $25 million! Wallahi, if I knew
where he was, I would have turned
him in myself. I had to borrow from
my boss to pay for my niece’s
wedding.

DEDDAAHI
It’s not in my hands, Mohamedou.
They want to talk to you.

Mohamedou glances back to his Mother watching from the house.

MOHAMEDOU
Let me change, they’ll confuse me
for a Gulf prince.

Deddahi smirks, nods him on.

INT. SLAHI HOME - BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Mohamedou changes into jeans and a shirt, eyes out the window
where Deddahi and his Officers smoke and chat in the street.
Mohamedou slips out his cell phone, a moment of hesitation before he deletes all his contacts.

**EXT. SLAHI HOME/STREET – MOMENTS LATER**

Mohamedou steps out, his Mother trailing after him, anxious. The Officers perk up as they approach --

**DEDDAHI**
You’ll ride with me.

**MOHAMEDOU**
I can drive myself.
(then, explaining)
The only thing people should talk about at a wedding is the bride.

**DEDDAHI**
(suspicious)
Then give me your phone.

Mohamedou hands it over. Deddahi’s insurance policy.

**DEDDAHI (CONT’D)**
(to Officers)
Yalla, he knows the way.

Deddahi and his Officers climb into their Mercedes. Mohamedou hustles to his old silver NISSAN parked in the street.

**MOHAMEDOU’S MOTHER**
What do I tell everyone?

**MOHAMEDOU**
Tell them... it’s work.

**MOHAMEDOU’S MOTHER**
At night, like this, you’re working?

**MOHAMEDOU**
German client, different time zone.

His Mother suddenly wraps him in a tight hug, mutters the crisis prayer under her breath. Mohamedou comforts her.

**MOHAMEDOU (CONT’D)**
They wouldn’t let me drive if I wasn’t coming back.
(then)
Save me some cake.

Mohamedou squirms free from her embrace, slides into his car.
His Mother attempts to hold on as if she already knows this is the last time she will hold her son.

**INT./EXT. MOHAMEDOU’S NISSAN/STREET – CONTINUOUS**

Mohamedou pulls out, following the police Mercedes ahead. He takes a long look at his mom in the rear-view mirror. She counts out Tasbih (prayers) on her raised right hand.

A wave of sadness washes over Mohamedou as she slowly fades into the night behind him. We drive with him for a moment through this sandy nighttime city.

**MAIN TITLE: The Mauritanian**

Pre-lap the sound of US city traffic and a honking horn

**EXT. NANCY’S CAR – ALBUQUERQUE DOWNTOWN – DAY.**

A dusty BMW drives through the city at speed. A patchwork of bumper stickers on the back proclaim everything from Jesse Jackson’s campaign to ‘No War for Oil’.

**INT. NANCY’S CAR – DAY – ALBUQUERQUE DOWNTOWN – DAY**

Cellphone at her ear, we meet Nancy Hollander, criminal defense lawyer: bright colored nails, silver hair, silver jewelry and a take-no-prisoners attitude.

  NANCY (INTO PHONE)
  (mid conversation)
  -- Yeah, well, she’s not my client anymore. If she needs legal counsel, tell her to schedule an appointment. Otherwise...I don’t know, the rest of her life is up to her....did OFW get back to us? ...
  That’s bullshit. Tell them it’s bullshit and I’m done bargaining. ...Okay, and let David know I’ll be dialing in for the partner meeting...

She spots a parking spot outside the New Mexico Court of appeals and veers into it at speed. A car behind toots.

  NANCY (INTO PHONE) (CONT’D)
  I gotta go.

She hangs up. No ceremony
Nancy exits her car and dashes across the road and into the court house.
INT. NEW MEXICO COURT OF APPEALS - LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

As Nancy sweeps through the metal detector --

EMMANUEL (O.S.)
Nancy!

Behind her, EMMANUEL COSTE (40s), a doughy French lawyer, jumps the line to pass through security.

NANCY
(doesn’t stop)
I didn’t know you were in town.

EMMANUEL
(catches up to her)
I have a hearing at three. There’s something I need to ask of you, can we take lunch?

NANCY
I’m up right now. Find me across the street after.

Not one for small talk, Nancy splits off into --

INT. NEW MEXICO COURT OF APPEALS - COURTROOM - CONTINUOUS

A sparse crowd of LAWYERS and PARALEGALS line the pews. A JUDGE presides over pre-trial hearings. Far from the pomp and ceremony of trial law, this is where the endless formalities of American justice grind out.

Nancy slides down a back bench, joins THERESA “Teri” DUNCAN (Late 20’s) and a couple of other ASSOCIATES.

NANCY
The bulletin said Goranson was up at nine?

Teri straightens up, surprised to see Nancy. Her reaction tells us that Nancy’s presence here is a big deal.

TERI
Are you sitting in or... are you thinking of coming on? I mean, we’d be lucky to have you.

NANCY
Your plaintiff made the news yesterday.
TERI
He’s not rattled, we expected that.
The airlines want to make it a PR
campaign, we’ll beat them in court.

Nancy mulls over her answer, then --

NANCY
Do you have an extra copy of the
brief?

Teri, containing her excitement, collects her paperwork.

EXT. EL PAISA TAQUERIA - DAY

Nancy sits at a table in the forecourt of a busy taqueria
reading a newspaper. There is an article about the airline
price-fixing case. Below it is a cartoon showing a hapless
passenger with a bag falling on his head.

EMMANUEL (O.S.)
You are too quick, I was hoping to
buy you lunch.

Nancy barely glances up as Emmanuel approaches her.

NANCY
Order at the window. I recommend
the asada.

Emmanuel eyes the customers, mostly BAILIFFS and COURTHOUSE
EMPLOYEES. He’s not eating here.

EMMANUEL
How’s Bill?

NANCY
Brian. We separated.

EMMANUEL
I’m sorry to hear that.

NANCY
So was he. What do you need?

EMMANUEL
Last week in Paris, a lawyer from
Mauritania approached my firm –

NANCY
Mauritania?
EMMANUEL
(back to story)
The lawyer, he’s working on behalf of a family there. In November 2001, their son was taken for questioning by Mauritanian Police. Like that, pfft, he disappears. Three years, they don’t know, is he dead? In prison? They don’t know, no one knows. Then a few weeks ago, Der Speigel writes a story saying he’s detained in Guantanamo Bay.
(Nancy perks up)
They say he’s one of the organizers of 9/11 --

NANCY
Is he?

EMMANUEL
I don’t know. I haven’t spoken with him, Guantanamo will not even confirm if he’s there. I don’t have the security clearance --

NANCY
(knows what he’s asking)
We’re not getting involved with Gitmo.

EMMANUEL
You still have clearance from your NSA suit, no? One phone call, see if he’s there.

Nancy mulls it over, pushes forward a pen and paper.

NANCY
The prisoner, what’s his name?

INT. FBH LAW FIRM – NANCY’S CORNER OFFICE – NIGHT

Phone at her ear, Nancy paces behind her desk, barely containing her frustration --

NANCY (INTO PHONE)
Slahi. S-L-A-H-I. First name Mohamedou. Not Mohammmed. Mo-ham-me-dou... Check the logs... He’s not there or you don’t know if he’s not there? ...Yeah, I’ll hold.
Nancy looks up to find Teri waiting in her doorway.

TERI
Goranson?
(off Nancy’s confusion)
Airlines.

NANCY
(remembers, motions)
Right there.

Teri gathers her case files from Nancy’s desk, it’s clear that Nancy’s already moved on to another fight.

NANCY (INTO PHONE) (CONT’D)
It’s your facility, how do you not know who you’re holding?

NOTICE the Der Speigel website open on Nancy’s desktop computer. Mohamedou’s face stares back at her. His inscrutable mugshot a far cry from the carefree young man at his Niece’s wedding three years ago.

NANCY (INTO PHONE) (CONT’D)
He’s not not there? What does that mean? He’s not Schrodinger’s cat, he’s either there or he’s not there...

INT. FBH LAW FIRM – CONFERENCE ROOM – DAY

A few days later. Nancy sits at a conference table with the firm’s other PARTNERS (DAVID, JOHN & JOE). Everyone is eating bagels or drinking coffee. They flip through a top sheet on the Mohamedou case. NOTICE the firm’s ASSOCIATES (including Teri) line the outer ring of the room.

JOHN
(baffled)
You want to represent the lead recruiter of 9/11?

NANCY
Alleged. And no, I’m defending habeas corpus, which Bush and Rumsfeld are gleefully dismantling.

DAVID
Nancy, we’d all love a pop at this administration, but there’s more to consider.
(RE: top sheet)
PEOPLE WANNA SEE THESE GUYS BURN.
JOHN
Including plenty of prospective clients.

JOE
Do we even want to legitimize what they’re doing down there?

NANCY
The US government is holding upwards of 700 prisoners in Guantanamo. We don’t know who they are, the charges against them, and when or if, they’ll ever appear before a judge. This is happening, whether we legitimize it or not.

DAVID
... I don’t want you spinning your wheels on this.

Nancy eyes David, who clearly wants her to drop it.

NANCY
David, as partners, we agreed we could pick our own fights, pro bono, without interference. I like the look of this fight.
(David nods)
I’m here as a courtesy.

Reluctantly amused, David eyes Nancy with the warmth reserved for an old friend. Yes, she’s trouble but the good kind.

DAVID
OK. What do you need?

NANCY
Just me for now, and a translator with security clearance. The prisoner speaks --
(checks her notes)
Arabic, French, and German.

JOHN
Sounds expensive.

NANCY
(Is this a retreat or a plan?)
Teri, you speak French, right?

Teri perks up, surprised to be drawn into a conversation way above her head.
TERI
Yes, but I’m on the Goranson case.
(clarifying)
Airlines, price-fixing.

NANCY
It doesn’t have legs.
(to David)
I looked at it.
(back to Teri)
You’ve got the wrong plaintiff.
He’s already the goof with the suitcase on his head. That’s all
any jury will ever see him as.

DAVID
(buys her assessment)
Teri?

All eyes on Teri. She has to decide right now, in or out.

Nancy glances back, locks eyes with Teri, expectant. Implicit
in her poker face is a challenge...

TERI
Sure. Who doesn’t want a free trip
to Cuba?

INT. SHERATON NEW ORLEANS - LOBBY - NIGHT

A herd of MEN and WOMEN in military dress uniforms clear out
of a conference room. A banner reads, ‘New Orleans Admiralty &
Maritime Law Conference ’05’.

FIND COLONEL BILL SEIDEL (50s) waiting in the lobby. NOTICE
the TVs behind the bar stream endless coverage of the Bush vs
Kerry election. But Seidel’s focus is on the phalanx of JAG
LAWYERS marching past him. He perks up, spotting --

SEIDEL
Hey, Stu!

JAG MAJOR STUART COUCH (30s) in the middle of the pack. He
walks alongside a JAG Officer (ARJUN 20s, Indian-American).

COUCH
(North Carolina drawl)
I’ll catch up with ya’ll in a few.

Couch separates from the herd.
COUCH (CONT'D)
Didn’t spot your name on the
schedule, sir, you giving a talk?

SEIDEL
Just passing through. You know Whit
Cobb up at OGC?

COUCH
A little. What gives?

SEIDEL
We’re putting something together,
your name came up. You have a
minute?

Couch knows not to ask any further questions --

INT. SHERATON NEW ORLEANS - SUITE - NIGHT

Couch follows Seidel into an anonymous hotel suite.

WHIT COBB (50s, civilian suit) sits on an armchair, a spread
of used cups and half-eaten pastries litter the coffee table.
They’ve been doing interviews all day.

COUCH
How you been, Whit?

WHIT
Stuart, it’s great to see you after
all these years.

Couch notices a MAN dressed in casuals hanging back at the
dining table.

SEIDEL
That’s Bob, he’s OGA.

The Man, BOB, simply nods. Couch doesn’t press it further,
knows a spy when he sees one.

SEIDEL (CONT'D)
(to Whit, RE: Couch)
I met Stu on a drug-ring case back
in... when was it?

COUCH
’96 – ’97.
SEIDEL
He rolled them up, one after another. Lehnert called him his ‘dog on a chain’.

COUCH
(laughing)
General Lehnert could get us to low-crawl through hell in a gasoline suit.

A beat.

WHIT
You been paying much attention to what’s going on down at Gitmo?

SEIDEL
(off Couch’s nod)
I have orders to stand up a 9/11 war court for enemy combatants held at Guantanamo. Under jurisdiction of the president.

He’s got Couch’s attention.

WHIT
You’re familiar with Ex Parte Quirin?

COUCH
(dredging his memory)
The World War II case? Eight Nazi saboteurs got caught sneaking into the US by sea?

WHIT
(nods)
Supreme Court green-lit trial by military commission - stripped-down rules. Eight Nazis, eight convictions in less than a month.

SEIDEL
You forgot the punchline: six got the electric chair. Rough justice - that’s what this Administration wants. We’ve taken a lot of prisoners in Afghanistan, working our way up to bin Laden and the guys who planned this shit. There’s a backlog needs clearing.
COUCH
My understanding is not all the detainees at Gitmo were caught in Afghanistan, sir?

BOB
(from back of room)
Does extraordinary rendition disturb you, Major?

COUCH
No. They’re the ones who picked this fight. They hit our embassy’s in East Africa, the Cole in Yemen – and then the US mainland. They made the battlefield global. We gotta scoop them where we can find them.

Bob sits back, at ease. That’s the right answer.

WHIT
Bill tells me a good friend of yours was on one of the 9/11 planes?

COUCH
Bruce Taylor, he was First Officer on United One Seventy Five, the plane that hit the South tower. We flew KC-130’s together at Cherry Point. Cathy and my wife, Kim, worked at the same hospital.

Whit motions to Seidel who presents Couch with a folder stamped TOP SECRET/NOFORN.

SEIDEL
Mohamedou Ould Slahi. The Mauritanian.

Couch opens the folder. He scans the topsheet, a profile of Mohamedou. The same photo from Der Speigel.

SEIDEL (CONT’D)
Fought with Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan in the 90s – became a key recruiter for 9/11 in Germany. He recruited Marwan Al-Shehhi – the fucker who flew your friend’s plane into the south tower.

A heavy beat.
WHIT
The administration sees this as the first death penalty case. We want you as lead.

The weight of that lands on Couch.

COUCH
When do we start?

EXT. FORT LAUDERDALE AIRPORT - TARMAC - DAWN
A small prop plane with ‘Air Sunshine’ emblazoned in faded yellow on the side, taxis out to the runway.

INT. AIR SUNSHINE PLANE/TARMAC - CONTINUOUS.
Nancy buckles into her cramped seat as the plane taxis. The CO-PILOT addresses his passengers from the open cockpit. He strains to be heard over the propellers --

CO-PILOT
Our flight time is three and a half hours to Cuba. We offer no beverages, no snacks, and no facilities aboard this aircraft. I hope y’all have sufficiently relieved yourselves.

Nancy closes her eyes. She knows to get sleep when she can. Notice Teri sitting anxiously next to her with a large take-away coffee in her hand.

EXT. AIR SUNSHINE PLANE - TROPICAL CLOUDS - DAY
The small plane is buffeted by the Caribbean thermals.

INT. AIR SUNSHINE PLANE - TROPICAL CLOUDS - DAY
The plane lurches around, unsettling Nancy from her slumber. She glances across the narrow aisle, where:
A MALE LAWYER surreptitiously empties his bladder into a coke bottle. His jacket strategically positioned across his lap. He catches Nancy watching, gives her an apologetic look. Teri has seen too and leans over to Nancy.
TERI
Guess they’ve gotta keep some
advantages.

Nancy shrugs it off, looks out the window...

OMITTED

INT./EXT. SCHOOL BUS – MOVING – DAY

Nancy, Teri and the other lawyers sit incongruously in a re-
purposed yellow American school bus. They all have GITMO
PASSES dangling on lanyards around their necks. The DRIVER is
a Jamaican contractor with short dreads. He has Jimmy Buffet
styled island music playing quietly on the radio. A MILITARY
ESCORT stands in the aisle to address them:

MILITARY ESCORT
If you stray outside the designated
areas, you will be removed from the
island. Apart from your clients,
you are not to speak to or
communicate with the detainees. Do
so and you will be removed from the
island. You are not to share
classified information with your
client, even if it pertains to his
case. Illegal disclosures may
result in your arrest and immediate
removal from the island...

The bus pulls up in front of a squat building that houses two
fast food take away joints.

MILITARY ESCORT (CONT'D)
If you wish to grab your clients
some grub, do so now.

Teri looks to Nancy, confused --

TERI
Do we know what he likes?

NANCY
Get the Fillet ‘O Fish. It’s halal.
INT./EXT. SCHOOL BUS – APPROACH ROAD TO GUANTANAMO – DAY 23A

Now clutching their baggies of fast food the lawyers drive towards the prison itself: guard towers, fences and barbed wire.

EXT. GUANTANAMO PRISON – OUTER PERMITER – DAY 23B

The bus pulls in to the main gate. Nancy, Teri and the other lawyers file off. The sea wind hits them through the fencing.

GATE GUARD
Honour Bound.

MILITARY ESCORT
Defending Freedom.

Nancy and Teri lock eyes for a moment at the absurdity of it all.

EXT/INT. GUANTANAMO BAY – BADGING OFFICE – DAY 24

As the lawyers enter the cramped office, sniffer dogs examine their briefcases, sniffing greedily at the take-away bag.

BADGING OFFICER
Step up to the line, ID’s out.

Nancy steps up, slides over her passport. The badging officer checks her name, against the one on her Gitmo pass.

BADGING OFFICER (CONT’D)
Leave your bag here. You can take a notepad and one writing implement in with you.

Nancy takes out a note pad and pencil and hands her bag over.

BADGING OFFICER
(sliding something towards Nancy)
It’s recommended you wear a hijab when visiting your client. We’ve had incidences of inmates spitting at female lawyers or spraying bodily fluids.

Nancy doesn’t give the hijabs a second look.

BADGING OFFICER
(to Teri)
Step up to the line, ID’s out.
EXT. CAMP ECHO – COURTYARD – DAY

Nancy and Teri, carrying their take-away to-go bag, follow the Military Escort across the blinding white pea-gravel courtyard. The ranks of Lawyers now thinned.

Nondescript MILITARY HUTS line the designated walkway. Around them, there are no trees, nothing living. Signs extol residents to look after the Iguanas - at risk of a $10K fine. The Military Escort stops at one of the huts, checks his list.

MILITARY ESCORT
Detainee seven-sixty.
(silence)
Hollander and Duncan?

Nancy and Teri nod.

MILITARY ESCORT.
Any notes you take are deemed classified, we’ll collect them after your interview. You can retrieve them at a secure facility stateside.

A FEMALE GUARD takes a look in the take-away bag.

FEMALE GUARD
For your own safety we’ll be monitoring the meeting.

NANCY
You’re listening to us?

FEMALE GUARD
Video only. In the event the detainee lunges for you push away from the table, we’ll be in there as quick as we can.

With that, the Female Guard opens the door.

INT. CAMP ECHO – VISITING CELL – CONTINUOUS

Nancy and Teri, wary, step into the small, windowless meeting room. Across the table sits:

Mohamedou, gaunt, clean-shaven, dressed in a tan jumpsuit. He squints at the sunlight streaming through the open door. He puts down a SMALL GREEN EXERCISE BOOK and a pencil. The Guard quickly slams it shut behind them.
Mohamedou has not only lost weight, but also his lightness of spirit. His calm, zen-like presence masks a deep-seated hopelessness born from his three years of captivity.

TERI
(unsure)
As-Salaam- Alaikum.

MOHAMEDOU
Wa-Alaikum-Salaam.

NOTICE Mohamedou wears ankle shackles looped into an eye-bolt in the floor. Teri nervously starts in French:

TERI
Bonjour. Enchante. Je suis Maitre
Theresa Duncan et je voudrais présenter, Parteneur Nancy Hollander.

Mohamedou moves to his feet. A small smile breaking on his face.

MOHAMEDOU
My lawyers!

He holds his arms out and Teri and Nancy in turn awkwardly embrace him.

TERI
Amazing. You speak English?

MOHAMEDOU
So do you!

TERI
We didn’t know – how did you learn?

MOHAMEDOU
One word at a time. When I first came here, I hated the sound of English, because of the pain they caused me; I tried not to learn it. But that was emotion. Later, wisdom took over. I decided to learn so I could better understand my situation and my environment.

He gestures to the chairs.
MOHAMEDOU (CONT'D)
Please, sit. If we are in my home, I offer tea, y’know, but we are not in my home.

NANCY
Let’s see what we can do about that.

They all take a seat.
NANCY (CONT'D)
I’m Nancy Hollander, this is my associate, Teri Duncan. We are with a firm called Freedman, Boyd & Hollander, based in New Mexico. We wish to represent you.

MOHAMEDOU
Straight to business, very American of you. Maybe we get to know each other first, yes?

TERI
We brought you some food.
(offers him the take-away bag)
I hope it’s okay, it’s all they have on base.

Mohamedou peers in the bag, pushes it away.

MOHAMEDOU
Thank you, but I watch my figure.

NANCY
Mr Slahi - I under --

MOHAMEDOU
Mohamedou. Call me Mohamedou.

NANCY
Mohamedou, yes...I understand it might be hard to believe but we are not here as interrogators or working for the US government in any way.

MOHAMEDOU
When you walk in, already I know this. No interrogator is afraid of his prisoner, y’know.

Teri embarrassed, but Nancy pushes on --

NANCY
Let me explain your legal situation. In June, the Supreme Court ruled that prisoners in Guantanamo are entitled to file habeas corpus petitions. A habeas petition requires the government to produce the evidence which they have against a prisoner.

(MORE)
NANCY (CONT'D)
Then a court decides if that 
evidence is enough to justify 
holding the prisoner. If it isn’t, 
the prisoner is released.

Nancy slides a contract and pen across the table.

NANCY (CONT'D)
If you agree to let us represent 
you, we’ll file for a writ of 
habeas on your behalf.

Mohamedou eyes the form with suspicion.

MOHAMEDOU
But you don’t even ask me if I am guilty.

NANCY
Are you?

MOHAMEDOU
No.

TERI
So why do you think you are here?

MOAHMEDOU.
I was in the wrong place at the 
wrong time. And because of this 
they kidnapped me from my home, 
imprisoned me in Jordan for 5 
months, then a military base in 
Afghanistan – which was like living 
in a toilet, by the way - and then 
brought be here, with a bag on my 
head and chains around my body. 
(getting upset)
Would this happen to you? If I was 
Swedish or American? No. They think 
they can do it because I am an Arab 
and my country is weak - and I am 
stupid.

Nancy just nods but Teri is visibly distressed.

NANCY
What do they accuse you of during 
your interrogations?

MOHAMEDOU
Wallahi, I am interrogated eighteen 
hours, every day, three years.

(MORE)
MOHAMEDOU (CONT'D)
That’s like... go ask Charlie Sheen
to name all his girlfriends.
Teri laughs at the unexpected reference.

TERI
So you get the news here?

MOHAMEDOU
Now, because I “co-operate” they let me have a TV. We don’t get real news, but y’know, we have this show, ‘E exclamation’.

TERI
(continuing the joke)
It’s just ‘E’, I think the exclamation is silent.

NANCY
(won’t be distracted)
They must accuse you of something.

MOHAMEDOU
They accuse me of being here. They say, “you are here so you must have done something bad, Otherwise you wouldn’t be here.” How can I argue against such crystal logic?

NANCY
Were you a member of Al Qaida?

MOHAMEDOU
Yes – but a long time ago. for a few months in 1991. I fought WITH the Americans against the communists who were killing our women and children. I killed no one. Then I left. I have nothing more to do with them.

NANCY
Can you prove that?

MOHAMEDOU
What do you want, a receipt?

He lets out an exasperated “bof”.

NANCY
Have they shown any evidence against you?
MOHAMEDOU
Nothing... One time they showed
that I had taken a call from Bin
Laden’s satellite phone --

TERI
Did you?
MOHAMEDOU
Yes, but it was my cousin. He calls me, I don’t know what phone he is using. It’s a crime to take a call?

NANCY
And he only called you once from Bin Laden’s phone?

MOHAMEDOU
(suddenly cautious)
... They are watching everything I say, y’know, everything I do.

Mohamedou motions to the security camera in the corner.

TERI
They only have video.

Mohamedou just laughs cynically at their naivete.

MOHAMEDOU
We can’t talk about these things, not here.

NANCY
Would you write it down?
Your story. How you got here, everything that happened to you?

MOHAMEDOU
So my interrogators can read it, ask me “What do you mean by this? Why you are talking in code?”

NANCY
We need your testimony and if you let us represent you, we’ll have attorney-client privilege. That means anything you tell us, and anything you write down, is protected from the prosecution by law, and can’t be used against you.

(he’s interested)
All you have to do is send the pages to me as letters. Tell your guards they are attorney-client communications and watch them seal the envelopes. That’s very important. Then they’ll be sent to a secure facility in the US where we can read them. If the seal’s broken, we’ll know.
MOHAMEDOU
... So I tell you everything, and you go to America and make trouble. Then you forget about me and I answer for all the trouble you’ve made?

NANCY
As long as you’re here, I’ll keep coming back. As your lawyer that’s what I’ll do, until you get out.
(RE: contract)
If you don’t want that, don’t sign, you can stay here, trouble-free.

Mohamedou weighs his options... a sudden bang on the door.

FEMALE GUARD (SHOUTS THROUGH DOOR)
One minute!

Mohamedou eyes Nancy, who remains poker-faced...

MOHAMEDOU
D’accord, okay.
(he signs the form)
But you do one thing for me.

Mohamedou scrawls a number onto Nancy’s notepad.

MOHAMEDOU (CONT’D)
Call this number, ask to speak to my mother. Tell her, I don’t know...tell her something nice.

Teri studies the number on the notepad as --

Suddenly the door swings open, the Female Guard steps in. She holds out a manila envelope --

FEMALE GUARD
That’s it. Notes in here, you’ll get them back at the secure facility Stateside.

Nancy and Teri drop their notebooks into the envelope. The Female Guard seals it as she leads them to the door --

MOHAMEDOU
See you later alligators.

That stops them in their tracks. Unsure, they turn back --
MOHAMEDOU (CONT'D)
(off their silence)
Now you have to say, ‘after a while, Crocodile.’

NANCY
... Not for awhile, Crocodile.

INT. CAMP ECHO - MILITARY HUT - GUARD POST - CONTINUOUS

The Female Guard slams the door behind them, turns to find Nancy glaring at her.

NANCY
Who decided to put him in shackles?

FEMALE GUARD
Protocol. For your protection, ma’am.

NANCY
I’d just like to know whose name I should cite when I contact the National Security desk at the New York Times.. Tell your CO, I don’t want to see my client in shackles again.

Mortified, the Female Guard simply nods.

EXT. CAMP ECHO - PATHWAYS - DAY

Accompanied by their military escort, Nancy and Teri are guided back to the prison entrance. Nancy notices Teri muttering under her breath.

NANCY
Are you... praying?

TERI
Memorizing his mother’s number.

NANCY
We’re not calling that number. Not before we clear it. We don’t know who’s on the other end of that line.

TERI
You don’t think it’s his mother?
NANCY
I don’t know. But no one just gets
a call from Bin Laden’s sat-phone.

Teri studies Nancy, trying to make sense of her.

INT. PENTAGON ANNEXE – FOYER / COUCH’S OFFICE – DAY

Couch stands near a security station as ARJUN (recognize him
from New Orleans conference) is processed.

ARJUN
I’ll have to call my Dad, tell him
I had lunch at the Pentagon.

COUCH
Don’t worry, chow’s just as bad as
Lejeune. Thanks for coming.

Handshakes and they start walking back to Couch’s office.

ARJUN
Anything you can’t talk about over
comms has gotta be worth the drive.

COUCH
Listen, Arjun, I’m working one of
these Gitmo cases --

ARJUN
I heard. I also heard you already
had your team.

COUCH
Yeah, they’re over there.

Couch nods across the office, where a group of JUNIOR
PROSECUTORS sit together, eating sandwiches. They wear a mix
of uniforms.

ARJUN
Army, Navy and Air force? Looks
like you got all services in play.

They reach Couch’s office and sit down.

COUCH
It’s a high-vis case, my convening
authority’s the White House.
(Arjun’s impressed)
(MORE)
COUCH (CONT’D)
But I want someone who’s working for me, not worrying about whether they’re working for their daddy-rabbit across the street?’

ARJUN
... I’m game. I’m all over it.

Couch smiles, exactly what he expected.

COUCH
I’ll have to bring you on as a specialist. How’s your Arabic?

ARJUN
Non-existent, sir. I’m Indian.

COUCH
I know that, they don’t.
(Arjun gets it)
I’ll put the orders in with HQMC this afternoon.

INT. FBY LAW FIRM – CONFERENCE ROOM – DAY

Nancy and Teri sit alone at the large table. Teri dials a number into the speaker-phone. This call has been arranged in advance so a translator could be present at the other end. After a few rings...

TRANSLATOR (THROUGH PHONE)
Allo?

TERI
Hello. I am calling to speak to Madam Slahi.

There are murmurings on the other end of the phone. We hear Mohamedou’s mother speaking in Hasanyi and then a translator:

TRANSLATOR (THROUGH PHONE)
Yes, she is here.

TERI
Please tell her: my name is Teri Duncan, I’m here with my associate, Nancy Hollander. We’re lawyers based in America, we’re working for your son.

The translator can be heard murmuring quickly on the other end of the phone followed by Mohamedou’s mother’s voice
TRANSLATOR (THROUGH PHONE)
Mohamedou? You’ve seen him?

TERI
Yes. In Guantanamo prison, Cuba.

The translator relays this. We hear a heaving sob emanate from Mohamedou’s mother - something primal and gut wrenching. Teri struggles to keep her emotions in check.

A PARALEGAL at the door. Nancy motions her into the room. The Paralegal slinks in, hands Nancy a note.

Nancy eyes the note, mutes the phone --

NANCY
Wrap it up, see me after.

Teri, baffled, watches as Nancy steps out. Then remembers to unmute the call --

TRANSLATOR (THROUGH PHONE)
Hello? Hello?..., Mrs Slahi would like to know: is he okay? How does he look? Is he eating?

TERI
He looks well. He wanted us to tell you... He misses you very much.

INT. FBH LAW FIRM – NANCY’S OFFICE – LATER

Teri steps in to find Nancy packing up her laptop and notes.

NANCY
We have to go to Virginia, I got a notification from the Privilege Team.

TERI
I typed up the rest of the call for you.

Nancy looks up, Teri holds out a typed document for her. Obviously upset, Teri’s eyes are rimmed-red from crying.

For a year after he was arrested the guards at the prison in Mauritania told Mohamedou’s mother that he was still there.

(MORE)
TERI (CONT'D)
They asked for money to feed and
clothe him -- he wasn’t even in the
country -

Nancy cuts her off.

NANCY
- why do you think Mohamedou wanted
us to call her?

TERI
Because she’s his mother.

NANCY
Because every mother thinks their
son is innocent. That’s what he
wants us to hear. But that’s not
the case we’re building. We need to
prove the US government lacks
evidence sufficient to detain him.
Anything else is a distraction.
(then, back to packing)
Our files are ready. I want to be
in Virginia tonight.

31A  EXT. SUBURBAN STREETS - DAY
Couch drives his family (WIFE; KIM and TWO SONS; 6 &9) to

31B  INT. FALLS CHURCH - DAY
Couch and his family sit together in a narrow pew. They hold
hands, eyes closed as the Priest recites the scriptures.

Couch glances to a pew ahead, where CATHY (40s) sits with her
2 CHILDREN (teenagers).

31C  EXT. FALLS CHURCH - LATER
The small congregation disperses, Couch spots Cathy and her
kids heading towards their car.

COUCH
(to Kim)
Back in a sec.
(hustles after Cathy)
Cathy!

Cathy turns to find Couch approaching. Her kids continue
walking on ahead.
COUCH (CONT'D)
How are you?

CATHY
Good.

An awkward moment, he obviously has something on his mind...

CATHY (CONT'D)
Everything alright? Kim and the boys?

COUCH
I didn’t want you to hear this from anyone else, but I’m prosecuting a Gitmo case. One of the recruiters for 9/11.

Cathy taken aback.

CATHY
... He put those men on my husband’s plane?

COUCH
(nods)
I didn’t mean to ambush you, I just thought you should know.

CATHY
Thank you.

COUCH
Don’t thank me yet, we got a long way to go still.

CATHY
I know. But I think God has given you this opportunity to find justice. For Bruce and the others.

COUCH
I doubt I figure much in His plans.

CATHY
Bruce never liked coming to church much. He said he felt closer to God in the cockpit. Well, if God was with him on flight 175, then he’s sure as shit with you right now.

Stuart takes that in.
EXT. RENTAL CAR/ DC STREETS - MORNING

A rental car cruises through the Government district.

INT./EXT. RENTAL CAR/CRYSTAL CITY - LATER

Nancy behind the wheel, Teri shotgun. They eye the canyon of nondescript GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS --

TERI
It’s supposed to be right here.
They all look the same.

NANCY
That’s not by accident. Makes it harder to figure out which corner of the government’s fucking you.

Teri laughs, but Nancy’s not joking.

INT. PARKING STRUCTURE - LATER

Nancy and Teri pull into an enormous parking structure. They park up and walk towards the entrance.

INT. CRYSTAL CITY - SECURE ROOM CORRIDOR - LATER

A maze of concrete-block corridors with secure doors off to each side. Nancy and Teri follow KENT (40s), the beer-bellied head of the Privilege Team.

KENT
Any material you read here is between you and your client. But anything you want to cite in court or remove from the facility needs to be cleared by me or another member of the Privilege team.

TERI
You have to read it?

KENT
Every word. So try and only bring me the juicy stuff. But don’t panic: we’re walled off from the prosecution. If we share anything with them I’m doing prison time. And trust me, I’m not cut out for that.
NOTICE an office door open — other LAWYERS and GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS reading quietly in their own bubbles.

KENT (CONT'D)
Once we’ve reviewed the material we either designate it classified or protected. Classified means the material must remain in the facility. Protected means you don’t have to come in here to view it — we will fax it to your office, where it can only be accessed by those with proper clearance. If anything outta here shows up in my Sunday paper — well, you ladies are the lawyers, you know how that goes.

He stops in front of a door, unlocks it and hands them the key.

KENT (CONT'D)
Don’t lose your key, it’s a pain in the butt to find a locksmith with the clearance. That’s a joke, we have spares. My office is down there when you’re done.

NANCY
Wait, we didn’t get your name.

KENT
... Kent.

NANCY
Kent what?

KENT
Kent tell you any more than that.

As Kent shuffles away, Teri and Nancy enter the small, windowless room. Two manila envelopes sits on the table. Teri opens the first envelope, dumps out their notepads from their interview with Mohamedou.

Nancy checks the flap on the second envelope. The seal unbroken. Inside, loose sheets of paper. Pages of densely scrawled handwriting.

NANCY
From Mohamedou. Here, take half.

TERI
Where are the case files?
Nancy slumps down, starts reading.

TERI (CONT'D)
The government withheld the case files... Nancy?

NANCY
Yeah, they won’t give us anything.
Not until they absolutely have to.
I already put in a Freedom of Information request. Until then--
(RE: Pages)
Focus on our client’s testimony.

Teri takes her half, slumps down next to Nancy. The two of them read in the hallway of filing cabinets...

TERI
(checking pages)
When does yours start?

NANCY
This is his time in Germany. Yours?

TERI
August 5th 2002. When he first landed in Guantanamo...

INT./EXT. C17/GUANTANAMO AIRPORT TARMAC - DAY - FLASHBACK

NB. We see Mohamedou’s arrival at Guantanamo strictly from his POV. He wears black-out goggles and a hood and initially he can only see a small amount of light coming in at the bottom of the hood.

Blackness. Shouts struggle to be heard over the air-sucking whine of the C17’s jet engines.

MULTIPLE GUARDS
WALK/ HEAD DOWN/ KEEP WALKING! NO TALKING! DO NOT TALK! I’M GONNA FUCKING HURT YOU!

From Mohamedou’s POV we begin to see glancing images out of the bottom of his bag/goggles: A piece of the C-17 airplane, a daisy-chain of MILITARY GUARDS shoving a line of PRISONERS in orange jumpsuits, black bags over heads; hands and feet shackled. NOTICE: a soldier’s glove has GITMO, CUBA stencilled on it.

The guards force the detainees to keep their heads down, bending their backs. Mohamedou stumbles --
MISC. GUARD
Up! Get the fuck up!

A Guard yanks him to his feet, pushes him on.

We stay in Mohamedou’s POV as he steps out into the blazing Cuban sun.

MISC. GUARDS
Step, don’t fucking fall//Don’t you
die on me honey!

The C17 sits on the Guantanamo airstrip. Mohamedou moves on,
keeping step with the others.

Military Guards shout for the prisoners to kneel.

MISC. GUARD
Down on your knees! Get down! Get
down, Fuck-head.

Mohamedou is pushed down on his knees and his black-out hood
is lifted and his goggles are knocked as a guard pours water
somewhere near his mouth. Now he can see a little bit more.
The Prisoner next to Mohamedou struggles to stay upright.

PRISONER 1 (THROUGH BAG)
Sirs! Please, gentlemen! I’m
thirsty, please, gentlemen! More
water, please!

MOHAMEDOU (THROUGH BAG)
They don’t speak Arabic, Uncle, and
they’re far from gentlemen. Call
them whatever you want.

PRISONER 2 (THROUGH BAG)
Shut up, they’ll beat us.

MOHAMEDOU (THROUGH BAG)
No, they won’t. The Americans don’t
do that. They have laws –

MILITARY GUARD
Shut the fuck up! No talking!

INT. GUANTANAMO BAY - SHOWERS - DAY - FLASHBACK

Later. Scissors slice through cloth. Guards are cutting
Mohamedou’s clothes off around his chains. Finally they
remove his goggles and hood. The goggles have left raw,
broken skin around his eyes and ears.
For the first time Mohamedou can see soldiers and other prisoners around him. It’s all a blur of faces, lights, a shower, another prisoner – a big black man, naked.

Mohamedou is shoved by the Guards into the open shower. The water is freezing, his chained hands cover his privates. Unmasked, we see that his head and beard have been shaved clean.

The Guards pull Mohamedou out, roughly dry him and then bend him over a table for a rectal exam.

Then he’s marched into:

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**INT. GUANTANAMO BAY – CLINIC – DAY – FLASHBACK**

A NAVAL NURSE (30s, M) examines Mohamedou. He checks his eyes, ears, heart-rate but never directly addresses Mohamedou. A young MOROCCAN TRANSLATOR translates --

**NAVAL NURSE**

*Any known diseases?*

**MOHAMEDOU**

*Sciatic nerve, my lower back.*

The NAVAL NURSE ignores this and just takes blood.

When he’s done two guards pull Mohamedou up, dress him, pulling his chains through arm and legs holes in a choreographed, practiced manner. His legs will barely support him – we realize how exhausted he is after a 40 hour journey.

*(NOTE: Unless otherwise mentioned, Mohamedou is always clean shaven (beard and head) and wearing an Orange Jumpsuit in the FLASHBACKS)*

Now they take his picture and attach it to a LARGE GREEN ARMBAND which is wrapped around his wrist and locked with a tool. Alongside his picture it bears a number: DPUS000760.

37A


We see Mohamedou write his letter to Nancy. Intense concentration as he pours himself into the task.

38

**INT. CAMP DELTA – CORRIDOR – NIGHT – FLASHBACK**

Accompanied by 3 guards Mohamedou shuffles unsteadily down the corridor his arms and legs shackled. The heavy leg-chains make a racket on the floor.
INT. CAMP DELTA - MOHAMEDOU’S CELL - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

The iron door cranks open, Mohamedou shuffles in. One guard holds him by the waist as the other undoes his foot chains. Leaving his hands chained, the guards exit, slamming the door.

GUARD 1
(through door)
760. Turn around. Hands out...760.
That’s you! Hands out!

Mohamedou turns to face the door and puts his hands through the ‘bin-hole’. The guards undo one hand.

GUARD 1 (CONT’D)
Hand on head. HAND ON HEAD!

Mohamedou puts his free hand on his head while they undo the other hand. Once that’s done they slam the bin-hole shut.

Mohamedou (claustrophobic, struggling to breath) takes in his new home...

There’s no window, just dim strip light which remains on 24 hours a day. The walls are metal. There’s a toilet and sink in the corner. A thin mattress on a concrete slab for a bed. Neatly placed on the bed are a prayer mat, a Quran and basic toiletries: a small bar of soap, a micro-tube of toothpaste and a ‘finger toothbrush’ which has “Maximum Security” printed on it.

This must be the loneliest place on earth.

PRE-LAP -- the sound of a desert wind...

EXT. MAURITANIAN DESERT - DAY - MEMORY

A bleak expanse of desert. Mohamedou (aged 10) and his mother walk, their robes blowing in the wind; their faces set in sadness.

BEDOUIN WOMAN(PRE-LAP)
(in Arabic)
We were taking down our tents,
packing our camels. Your husband said he didn’t feel good...
EXT. MAURITANIAN DESERT - DAY - MEMORY

MOHAMEDOU now stands with his MOTHER listening to a BEDOUIN WOMAN, who periodically sniffs tobacco snuff and offers it to Mohamedou’s mother.

BEDOUIN
He would catch up to us. But when he didn’t show, We came back, he was lying here. So we buried him.

The Bedouin motions to a pile of rocks on the ground. A modest burial marker.

MOHAMEDOU’S MOTHER
He died alone?

BEDOUIN
(nodding)
His camels were still here.

Mohamedou stares at the pile of rocks, all that remains of his father. The vast desert stretches beyond him. Mohamedou perks up at the sound of distant singing...

MOHAMEDOU’S FATHER
Something that never holds still, I cannot keep it in place...

His FATHER walks a line of camels into the endless desert. He sings a traditional hida song to calm his flock --

10 Y.O. MOHAMEDOU
Baba! Baba, we’re here, come back.

But his Father doesn’t hear him, keeps on walking, slowly disappearing over the horizon...

10 Y.O. MOHAMEDOU (CONT’D)
Baba! Come back!

REALIZE Mohamedou now stands alone. His Mother and the Bedouin GONE, he’s surrounded by nothing but the empty desert.

But he can’t move, his ankles now buried in the sand. As he sinks underneath, swallowed by the desert --
INT. COUCH’S OFFICE – BULLPEN – PENTAGON – DAY

Close on Couch hanging a framed picture on the wall. It’s a newspaper clipping showing a photograph of Bruce Taylor’s funeral, his wife and children distorted in grief in front of the casket.

ARJUN (PRE-LAP)
This is our guy.

INT. COUCH’S OFFICE – BULLPEN – PENTAGON – DAY

Arjun is giving a power-point presentation. Couch and his entire team sit/stand observing. The screen shows the familiar mug-shot of Mohamedou.

ARJUN
He got a scholarship to study electrical engineering in Germany in 1988. Two years later he traveled to Afghanistan and joined Al Qaida.

Click. The screen now shows pictures of 2 other men.

ARJUN (CONT’D)
These are just two of the bad guys we know he associated with:
(RE: First picture)
Abu Hafz. Slahi’s cousin and brother-in-law. They were close growing up. In the mid 90’s Abu Hafz was designated “personal poet and spiritual advisor” to Osama Bin Laden himself. In January ’99, German BND tracked money transfers and phone calls between Slahi and his cousin. We can show that Slahi was financing terror.

(onto Second picture)
Ramzi Binalshibh. The so-called 20th hijacker. If Binalshibh’s visa hadn’t been rejected in 2000, he would’ve been at flight school with the rest of them. In ‘99, Slahi recruited Binalshibh and other members of the Hamburg cell, including Marwan al-Shehhi, pilot of the plane that hit the south Tower and Ziad Jarrah who was on United 93.

(MORE)
ARJUN (CONT'D)
There’s about ten other scary names he crossed paths with. This dude’s the Al Qaeda ‘Forrest Gump’; everywhere you look, he’s there.

COUCH
It’s all laid out in the top-sheet. Now we go through the intel reports, corroborate. Find me the evidence to light this guy up.

Couch motions to multiple stacks of boxes across the room, some still on handcarts. A literal mountain of evidence.

COUCH (CONT'D)
All the brain power at NASA, they still had to shoot down Mariner cause of one misplaced decimal point. Be thorough, exacting. We miss something, this guy goes home.

INT. CRYSTAL CITY - KENT’S OFFICE - DAY
Kent sits at his desk. Glasses on, he breezes through Mohamedou’s handwritten diary. A page turner.

Finished with his current sheet, he slides it into a sleeve, stamps the folder ‘PROTECTED.’

INT. FBH LAW FIRM - ADMIN OFFICE - DAY
A Fax Machine chugs out a scan of the same page. A CLERK slides the printout into a folder marked, ‘SLAHI/PROTECTED.’

INT. FBH LAW FIRM - BULLPEN - MOMENTS LATER
The Clerk paces across the office, folder in hand. He gets curious glances from the JUNIOR ASSOCIATES in the bullpen.

The Clerk steps into a far office. All the windows have been covered with sheets of newspaper. A handwritten sign on the door reads, ‘CLEARANCE ONLY. Don’t come in unless you want the CIA to tap your phone.’

INT. FBH LAW FIRM - SLAHI ‘WAR ROOM’ - CONTINUOUS
The Clerk steps in to find Nancy and Teri busy at work. They pore over a DETAILED TIME-LINE of Mohamedou’s life. We catch words and phrases: “MOS arrives Duisburg”/ ” ??
"/ "January 1999 First phone call from Abu Hafs"...scans of Mohamedou’s letters are spread out on the large table. The Clerk hands Teri the folder.

Teri removes the page from the folder, sets it down in its proper place on the table. The Clerk slips out unnoticed. Nancy scans the endless pages, trying to piece it together--Teri is writing a time-line of interrogation -
TERI
He’s questioned in Mauritania by the FBI. CIA then flies him to Jordan in an unmarked plane where Jordanian intelligence interrogate him for like, six months—then Bagram with US Military Intelligence, then Guantanamo where the FBI go for round two. It’s like he’s on some screwed-up round the world cruise.

PRE-LAP: BANG-BANG-BANG-BANG!!

INT. CAMP DELTA - MOUHAMEDOU’S CELL - NIGHT - FLASHBACK
Mohamedou looks terrified. Outside it sounds like a stampede. Escort guards are shouting and attacking the metal cells with batons.

GUARD 2
Reservation! Seven-sixty!

The guards smash the bin-hole open.

GUARD 2 (CONT'D)
Reservation! Gimme your hands!

Mohamedou has no idea what is going on but puts his hands through the hole. They chain him and pull him roughly from the cell.

INT. CAMP DELTA - CORRIDOR - NIGHT - FLASHBACK
Mohamedou is marched down a corridor of cells in shackles. The other DETAINERS shout encouragement as he passes --

PRISONER 1
Allah be with you, brother!

PRISONER 2
Keep your head on, they work for satan!

Mohamedou takes comfort in their cheerleading.

INT. INTERROGATION HUT - GUANTÁNAMO - NIGHT - FLASHBACK
Mohamedou sits on a metal chair, anxious and alone, his shackles attached to an eye bolt in the floor so he’s bent forward. He repeats the crisis prayer:
MOHAMEDOU
Ya Hayyu, ya Qayyumu, bi-rahmatika
astaghithu...[O Living, O Sustaining, in Your Mercy I seek relief...]

Two FBI agents, POULSON and SANTIAGO (30’s) in civilian clothes, enter the room with a MORROCAN TRANSLATOR.

POULSON
(American accent)
As-salamu ‘alaykum.

MOHAMEDOU
(reflex)
Wa’alaykumu assalam.

Poulson takes a chair opposite Mohamedou. The translator sits warily off to the side. Santiago stands in the corner—chewing tobacco and spitting into a plastic bottle.

Santiago is a former Marine, at once type-A and mellow, a Californian who actually surfs. Poulson feels more East Coast, uptight and buttoned-down.

Poulson leans in and unshackles Mohamedou’s wrists.

POULSON
Are you hungry? Thirsty?

The translator translates. Mohamedou shakes his head.

POULSON (CONT’D)
We’re here to have a conversation.
We want to understand your whole story — that’s it. No one’s going to hurt you; that shit’s not allowed. If we were in the U-S, you’d be provided with a lawyer free of charge. We’ll sit here as long as it takes. You understand?

Mohamedou nods.

SANTIAGO
You have any questions?

Mohamedou looks up, eyes suddenly alive — a glimpse of a younger, more naive man that we have seen before:

MOHAMEDOU
Why Cuba?!

The agents are taken aback.
MOHAMEDOU (CONT'D)
You guys hate Cuba!

POULSON
Who says we’re in Cuba?

MOHAMEDOU
I saw it on a guard’s glove when we got off the plane. It’s a secret we’re in Cuba?

The translator translates. Santiago spits casually into his bottle, grudgingly amused.

SANTIAGO
Not any more. The idea is to disorient you. We have a base here. It’s secure. It’s warm. I can surf when I’m off-duty.

MOHAMEDOU
It works for everybody.

SANTIAGO
Exactly

There’s a knock on the door. Poulson gets up and returns with a steaming cup of tea. Hands it to a grateful Mohamedou.

MOHAMEDOU
Thank you.

Palpable relief washes over him as the caffeine hits.

SANTIAGO
It’s, like, three hundred degrees in here. I don’t know how you guys wanna drink tea.

They laugh. We begin to sense this is all rehearsed.

SANTIAGO (CONT'D)
Are you married?

A moment of hesitation then:

MOHAMEDOU
I am divorced.

The translator translates then Mohamedou adds something:

MOHAMEDOU (CONT'D)
Are you?
Santiago assesses whether to answer.

SANTIAGO
Divorced too. But we’re not here to talk about me.

POULSON
Your dad’s job? Any travel?

MOHAMEDOU
He traveled constantly for work. He was a camel herder.

MOHAMEDOU (CONT’D)
He died when I was nine. All his life, he refused to ride in a car; He felt it would ruin his natural ability to navigate. For a Bedouin knowing what time of day it is and what direction you are going is everything. It’s so easy to die in the desert.

POULSON
He never rode in a car?

SANTIAGO
I’m calling bullshit!

MOHAMEDOU
You are right, I’m lying! One time he got in a car to look for a lost calf. But he freaked after about 2 seconds and got out.

Santiago spits into his bottle.

SANTIAGO
Full on!

MOHAMEDOU
My father’s one and only two-meters drive. You pried it out of me!

They laugh. A beat. All of this has been leading somewhere:

POULSON
Can we fast-forward a bit?

Relaxed, Mohamedou nods.

POULSON
Afghanistan. How you joined al-Qaeda.
Hold on Mohamedou.

EXT. CAMP DELTA - NEAR EXERCISE AREA - DAY - FLASHBACK

3 guards walk Mohamedou towards a cage - 15 feet by 10. They open the door, unshackle him and push him in.

EXT. CAMP DELTA - EXERCISE AREA - LATER - FLASHBACK

Mohamedou prays in his open air exercise cell. The tall fencing, covered in thick green mesh, allows no view of the world outside. All he can see is the sky and a sign which reads: DO NOT HARM THE IGUANAS: PENALTY $10,000. As he finishes up his asr salat, he hears footsteps in the next exercise cell.

MOHAMEDOU
May Allah accept your prayers.
(no response)
You don’t perform your Asr?

A voice responds from the next cell, we will come to know him as MARSEILLE. (NOTE: We never see Marseille, we only hear his voice. He speaks a mix of Arabic, French, and English).

MARSEILLE
If your prayers led you here, what good were they?

MOHAMEDOU
That’s where you’re wrong, I always prayed to see the world. Now I pray to get home.

Marseille can’t help but laugh.

MOHAMEDOU (CONT'D)
What’s your name, brother?

MARSEILLE
The guards listen out for names, you can call me two-four-two.

MOHAMEDOU
I’m not calling you by a number. Where are you from?

MARSEILLE
Marseille.
MOHAMEDOU
Nice to meet you, Marseille. I hear France is beautiful.

MARSEILLE
Then you’ve never been.
(in English)
It’s a real shit hole.
(back to French)
Or so I thought, then I come here.
And you? What am I calling you?

MOHAMEDOU
I’m from Mauritania.

MARSEILLE
Okay, Mauritanian.

MOHAMEDOU
What does it mean, ‘shit hole’?

MARSEILLE
You don’t learn English? How do you know what the guards are saying?

MOHAMEDOU
By the time I learn, I’ll be home already.

MARSEILLE
Maybe. Or maybe you’ll have to pray harder.

Irked, Mohamedou listens as Marseille laughs to himself.

INT. FANCY DINING CLUB – DC – DAY

EMMANUEL dines two CLIENTS. The WET-LUNCH CROWD enjoy $100 rib-eyes and bottles of wine charged to company cards. Whatever joke they’re sharing is interrupted by the ringing of Emmanuel’s cellphone. He checks it, rejects the call --

NANCY (O.S.)
Now I know you’re ignoring me (smiles).

He looks up to find Nancy standing over him, phone in hand.

EMMANUEL
Nancy, Do you know Jeff and Valerie? General counsel for Spirit Dynamics.
NANCY
Yeah, airplanes and missiles.
(then)
Why don’t I grab a seat? I wanted
to talk about that Guantanamo case
of ours.

That unsettles Jeff and Valerie --

EMMANUEL
(to Jeff and Valerie)
One minute, yes?

INT. FANCY DINING CLUB - LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

Emmanuel ushers Nancy away from any eavesdroppers --

NANCY
I need a favor.

EMMANUEL
Most people, they say ‘please, may
I?’; not this kamikaze bullshit.

NANCY
You owe me. I picked up the Slahi
case and got his family off your
back, let’s be honest, that’s all
you were hoping for.

EMMANUEL
(can’t argue)
OK. What do you need.

NANCY
I need to corroborate Slahi’s
testimony. There was a French
national detained at the same time
as him, Guantanamo refuse to
acknowledge his existence. I don’t
have a name, just his prison ID, 242.

EMMANUEL
What can I do with only a number?

NANCY
He’s from Marseille. Talk to DGSE,
see if they know where he is.
(off his hesitation)
One phone call.

Emmanuel eyes Nancy, knows he doesn’t have a choice.
Mohamedou is back with Poulson, Santiago and the translator.

MOHAMEDOU
You realize I have never met Bin Laden, don’t you?

POULSON
But he’s close to your cousin.

Mohamedou sighs – been through this a thousand times.

POULSON (CONT'D)
Co-operate and you’ll go home.
Start by telling me why your cousin wired you five thousand dollars from an Al Qaeda training camp.

MOHAMEDOU
I told you this already, I’m beginning to worry about your memory.

POULSON
Tell me again.

MOHAMEDOU
My cousin’s father was sick in Mauritania and needed money to pay the hospital bills. His son sent me the money and I paid the hospital.

POULSON
Do you have any proof?

MOHAMEDOU
Wallahi. Proof? You brought me here naked!

POULSON
Let me explain something Mohamedou, you’ve been designated special interest.

He pulls out a typed list of names. At the top sits Mohamedou’s.

POULSON (CONT'D)
You see this list? You are the highest value detainee we have in this entire facility.
MOHAMEDOU
(unsettled)
Me? But I have done nothing.

POULSON
Convince me. Cooperate.

MOHAMEDOU
Yes, I want to cooperate. But how
can I tell you what I don’t know?

Poulson throws down a mugshot of a Yemeni man. This is RAMZI
BIN AL-SHIBH.

MOHAMEDOU (CONT'D)
I don’t know this man.

SANTIAGO stands away from the table, casually chewing tobacco
with a coke-bottle spittoon. Mohamedou Focuses on the spit
gently dripping down the sides of the container...

SANTIAGO
Well he knows you. We captured him
in Pakistan and I interrogated him
myself. He was very co-operative.

Mohamedou studies the photo again, genuinely puzzled. He
closes his eyes for a second trying to recall.

MOHAMEDOU
Yes, I think we met one time.

SANTIAGO
Wrong again, bud. Ramzi Binalshibh
says he knows you very well.

MOHAMEDOU
That’s his name, Ramzi?

SANTIAGO
He was a key actor in 9/11 - the
20th hi-jacker. He says he stayed
with you in Germany. That you
recruited him and other members of
the Hamburg cell - Marwan Al-
Shehhi, Ziad Jarrah

MOHAMEDOU
(baffled)
He said that? It’s not true.

SANTIAGO
You’re not getting what I’m laying
down, Mo.

(MORE)
SANTIAGO (CONT'D)
We now have sworn testimony saying you were the head recruiter for 9/11. If you can’t sell me on your version of events, I gotta go with Binalshibh’s.

Mohamedou stares at the photo, remembering...

MOHAMEDOU
Yes, yes, I remember. He stayed with me only one night! It was a favor for a friend from the Mosque. My house was like that, ask anyone in Duisburg, anybody could come stay. This guy, it was late, he slept on my couch. I had to work the next day, he was gone when I got back. That’s it.

SANTIAGO
(unconvinced)
That’s it?

MOHAMEDOU
That’s it.

SANTIAGO
You’ll have to do better than that, Bud.

MOROCCAN TRANSLATOR
(going off script)
Look brother, I’ve been in a lot of American interrogations. The only way to help yourself is to talk. If they want to know about a guy, tell them about the guy.

MOHAMEDOU
(snaps in French)
You don’t tell me what to do! I speak more languages than you. I’ve seen the world! And I am not your brother!

Mohamedou settles, reels back his frustration...

MOHAMEDOU (CONT'D)
Sorry, I’m tired. Can we just talk for one minute about anything else?
Mohamedou stretches out his sciatic nerve. He would tell you otherwise, but he’s beginning to feel settled here. An IGUANA creeps up on the other side of the fence. Mohamedou looks it in the eye. The Iguana’s tongue flicks out. Mohamedou reaches out to touch it –

MARSEILLE
Hey, Mauritanian, is that you?

MOHAMEDOU
What’s up, Marseille?

MARSEILLE
I heard your number called for reservation last night. How was it?

MOHAMEDOU
Fantastic. They decided I’m innocent, I’m going home tomorrow.

MARSEILLE
(laughs, then)
Look up.

A moment later, a soccer ball flies over the partition, lands in Mohamedou’s yard. The shiny new leather glints in the sun.

MOHAMEDOU
How did you get this?

MARSEILLE
My interrogator, I gave her a name.

MOHAMEDOU
No, don’t do that. Now they’ll make that poor bastard suffer like us.

MARSEILLE
Good luck to them, I hope the CIA try to drag Omar Sharif down here.

MOHAMEDOU
(laughs)
They fell for this? Are you serious? Everyone knows that name.

MARSEILLE
Americans don’t know shit that isn’t American. Kick it over.

As Mohamedou and Marseille play ‘kick-up’ with the ball --
EXT. SLAHI HOME - BEACH - DAY - MEMORY

Mohamedou, now EIGHTEEN, plays beach soccer with his BROTHERS and other NEIGHBORHOOD KIDS. No shoes and a 'penny-flier' ball. Mohamedou bears down on goal, he takes his shot --

-- He shanks it, the ball flies wide, lands in the surf. The other players rib him for his terrible shot.

GOALKEEPER MOHAMEDOU'S BROTHER
I'm not getting wet. How did you donkey that?!

MOHAMEDOU'S MOTHER
Mohamedou! Come inside!

Mohamedou’s Mother calls to him from the house. He races off the pitch to merry jeers from his friends.

INT. SLAHI HOME - KITCHEN - DAY - MEMORY

Eighteen year old Mohamedou shuffles into the room, wary. His Mother huddles with a group of OLDER RELATIVES. An UNCLE grips a letter.

MOHAMEDOU'S MOTHER
A letter came from your school. You won the scholarship in Germany.

Mohamedou grins. Bursting with pride. But his mother crying.

MOHAMEDOU AGED 18
What’s wrong?

MOHAMEDOU'S MOTHER
Alhamdulillah, they say you are an exceptional student...but we will lose you.

She cries more and Mohamedou can’t bear it. Hates to see his mother upset. Tears start to form in his own eyes.

MOHAMEDOU AGED 18
I won’t go if you don’t want me to.

MOHAMEDOU’S UNCLE
(before she can answer)
Of course she wants you to! This is a blessing. You will be able to help the whole family economically. Your father who would not get in a car – he could not have dreamed of this for you.
57 OMITTED

58 **INT. COUCH’S OFFICE – PENTAGON – DAY**

Couch and his team make their way through the IRs. The walls are covered with maps, charts, photos. They’ve been busy. The stacks of files seem even higher. Arjun passes Couch a piece of paper.

ARJUN
Did you see they found someone to defend Slahi?

Couch looks up FBH on the computer and finds Nancy’s details

NAVY JUNIOR ASSOCIATE

Sir?
(Couch looks up)
I’m kinda confused. There are so many contradictions in these reports.

He holds a couple of IR’s.

COUCH
That’s how it is with this raw intelligence. You gotta order them by date – see how the story develops.

NAVY JUNIOR ASSOCIATE

That’s the thing. JTF interrogators, they left the dates off. I could put a call in?

COUCH
Good luck with that. CIA won’t help, they’re still treating Slahi’s intel as active.

COUCH reaches across, takes the IR from the Navy JAG.

COUCH (CONT’D)
(reads, surprised)
Neil Buckland....

ARJUN
Who’s that?
COUCH
He was a class mate of mine at Quantico. He wrote up the report.

Couch sets down the file, perplexed.
INT. AMERICAN LEGION BAR - VIRGINIA - NIGHT

The strip-lit hall plastered with flags and photos of servicemen. A few OLD VETS dot the hall. At the bar, FIND:

Couch with his old Cherry Point classmate, NEIL BUCKLAND (30s, CIA OFFICER). The BARTENDER sets down two PBRs.

BARTENDER
That’ll be three bucks.

NEIL
(to Couch, joking)
Let me get it. You can grab the tab next time we go out in Bethesda.

COUCH
How’s the rental market there? Thinking of bringing Kim and the boys for the summer if this case keeps dragging out.

NEIL
That’s your Gitmo thing? How’s it going?

COUCH
To be honest, I’m feeling a little lost in the sauce. It’ll move a lot quicker if I could find out how some of these IRs came together.

NEIL
Pff. No chance. Seventh floor’s keeping all the Gitmo intel locked up tight.

COUCH
Your name’s on a bunch of my case files. You were working down there when Slahi came in?

NEIL
Slahi? That’s your guy? You must be feeling it. I hear POTUS tracks him in his daily.

COUCH
You remember anything about him recruiting Binalshibh?
NEIL
I don’t know, Gitmo was churning out MFRs. The whole desk pitched in, put the reports together.

COUCH
MFR? What’s that?

NEIL
Memorandum for the Record. You’re working off of summaries. MFR’s carry the details; who was there, techniques used, detainee transcripts.

COUCH
Could you get me access to those?

NEIL
Not without violating the Espionage act. What do you need them for anyway? We know what they did, whole world watched it go down on TV.

Couch sips his beer, feeling the pressure.

GUARD/STEVE (PRE-LAP)
Seven-sixty, reservation! Hurry the fuck up!

INT. CAMP DELTA – MOHAMEDOU’S CELL – NIGHT – FLASHBACK

Mohamedou sits on his bed with a small SCHOOL EXERCISE BOOK writing down English words. A guard who we will come to know as STEVE is waiting at the door.

MOHAMEDOU
(practicing his English)
I said reservation mother fucker. Hurry the fuck up.

GUARD/STEVE
Knock it off, you’re not a parrot.

Mohamedou gets up and moves to the door sticking his hands through the hole.

MOHAMEDOU
Not a mother fucker parrot.
GUARD/STEVE
(can’t help but laugh)
Come on, man, get it together.

Steve proceeds to cuff Mohamedou.

GUARD/STEVE (CONT'D)
Turn around.

But Mohamedou doesn’t.

GUARD/STEVE (CONT'D)
Turn around!
Mohamedou turns and Steve continues to do the chains. Then the door opens and Steve does the chains on Mohamedou’s legs.

Mohamedou, you are good soldier, like GI Joe.

Steve smiles up at Mohamedou as he finishes off the chains.

Same room, Santiago and Poulson again. The Moroccan Translator struggles to keep up as Poulson shouts rapid-fire questions --

Poulson
Who recruited you to Al Qaeda?

Mohamedou
(In English)
No one.

Poulson throws his chair against the wall. Mohamedou startled by the sudden outburst.

Poulson
You just decided to become a fucking terrorist?

Mohamedou
(in English)
No, not terrorist.
(then in Arabic)
I went to Afghanistan to help Muslims who were being oppressed by the Soviet Empire. The Americans were fighting with us! We were on the same side.

Poulson
Who recruited you?
MOHAMEDOU
(In English)
No one. I volunteer. You don't listen.
Poulson throws his chair against the wall again.

TIME CUT. Same cell but weeks have passed. Now there is no translator. Mohamedou speaks broken English.

SANTIAGO (O.S.)
Why’d you delete all the contacts on your cellphone?

MOHAMEDOU
What do you mean?

SANTIAGO
When you were arrested your phone was wiped.

MOHAMEDOU
Is this a crime?

POULSON
Maybe. If you were protecting your contacts in Al Qaeda.

MOHAMEDOU
I was protecting my friends. So they don’t have to go through what I do just because of a phone number.

SANTIAGO
You’re sharp, that’s why they gave you that scholarship. You meet all the criteria.

MOHAMEDOU
Criteria? What is this?

SANTIAGO
You have the same profile as the hijackers. You’re a young Arab, you speak multiple languages, you studied electrical engineering and you travelled international --

MOHAMEDOU
(shouting)
What crime is any of this?!

EXT. CAMP DELTA - EXERCISE AREA - DAY - FLASHBACK

Mohamedou paces in the shade, practicing his English, writing words and phrases in his small book.
MOHAMEDOU
(to himself)
Don’t lie. Shut up. Where the fuck.

He brightens at the sound of the gate in the next cell.

MOHAMEDOU (CONT’D)
Marseille? Is that you?

MARSEILLE
How are you, Mauritanian?

MOHAMEDOU
What you doing, mother fucker?

MARSEILLE
You should learn English from your books, not the guards.

MOHAMEDOU
You’re not impressed? What’s wrong?

MARSEILLE
I received a letter from my wife.

MOHAMEDOU
That’s good, no?

MARSEILLE
A letter is not as good as a wife.
You have a family, children?

MOHAMEDOU
(ignores the question)
You would rather she is in here with us? What did she say?

MARSEILLE
... It’s private.

MOHAMEDOU
Everyone in the CIA has read it already. Come on.

MARSEILLE
(big laugh)
Fine, but don’t make fun... It begins, ‘my heart, I didn’t know what to write as I sat down --’

MOHAMEDOU
You brought it from your cell?
MARSEILLE
I know it backwards already. Stay quiet, listen... ‘The children are running around and I can’t think. I had to wait for them to sleep...’

Mohamedou edges closer to the fence.

MARSEILLE (CONT’D)
‘... It feels like I haven’t slept in years. When I lie in our bed, my nose remembers your scent on the pillow, my skin remembers your warmth on the sheets, and I’m scared I’ll never want to leave --’

Mohamedou lets the words carry him far away from here...

INT. DUISBURG APARTMENT – BEDROOM – NIGHT – MEMORY

Mohamedou makes love to his wife, WAFA (Mauritanian, 20). Despite their youth, they perform the act with an awkward formality. Their modesty lends a tenderness to the scene.

TIME CUT:

EARLY MORNING. Mohamedou steps out of the bathroom to find Wafa laying on her back, knees curled up to her chest.

MOHAMEDOU
What is that? What are you doing?

WAFA
The Doctor told me this would help. Do you want a boy or a girl? I know your mother wants a grandson, but I think we would make such a pretty daughter.

Uncomfortable, Mohamedou watches his wife on the bed...

Pre-lap:
The sound of an excited German TV football commentator

INT. MOHAMEDOU’S DUISBURG APARTMENT – DAY – MEMORY
Mohamedou is now surrounded by FRIENDS, draped on every sofa and armchair, they cheer for Germany, Rudi Voller has just equalized against Wales in a World Cup qualifier.

MOHAMEDOU’S FRIEND #1
Voller! Always there when you need him!

MOHAMEDOU’S FRIEND #2
In Rome, they call him the flying German.

Among the men, NOTICE Mohamedou’s best friend, a Moroccan called KARIM MEHDI. Slightly older, he sets himself apart from the others, something dis-contented and contemptuous about him.

MOHAMEDOU
He plays for Roma now?

MOHAMEDOU’S FRIEND #4
Without Rush, Wales have nothing.

Mohamedou smiles at Wafa – now wearing a head-scarf – who offers out dates and tops off everyone’s tea. She heads into the kitchen. When she returns --

TIME-CUT: A few of Mohamedou’s friends have gone, the few that remain eat take-out fries, watch news coverage of the war in Afghanistan.

MOHAMEDOU’S FRIEND #1
You know the Soviets kidnap women in helicopters now?

MOHAMEDOU’S FRIEND #2
They take them to their bases to rape them.

MOHAMEDOU’S FRIEND #3
The Masjid has sent nearly five thousand marks --

KARIM
Money? Volunteers are giving their lives.

MOHAMEDOU
So we just give up our lives here?

KARIM

(then, dead serious)
I’m going. I’ve already made arrangements.

It stops Mohamedou and the others in their tracks.

MOHAMEDOU’S FRIEND #1
Mashallah, I would go with you, if only I could convince my wife.

This gets a big laugh from the men. NOTICE Wafa watching Mohamedou, she leaves the room.

Close on Mohamedou’s face: a decision made.
INT. CRYSTAL CITY - CORRIDOR - DAY

Nancy and Terry walk down the distinctive cement-block corridor.

NANCY
How did your dinner go with that preppy looking guy?

At their door, Teri pulls out keys and opens up.

TERI
Reese. I cancelled.

INT. CRYSTAL CITY - SECURE ROOM - DAY

On the table are MULTIPLE DOCUMENT BINDERS.

TERI
That’s... a lot of case files.

NANCY
Government’s had a four year head start on us.

Nancy unties the first binder. Teri grabs another, joins her. Nancy flicks through the folder only to find page after page has been COMPLETELY AND ENTIRELY BLACKED OUT.

Nancy turns to Teri. Her binder is also completely redacted. Anger rising, Nancy grabs another binder...

TIME CUT:

Kent strolls down the row of filing cabinets, spots Nancy and Teri in the next aisle.
KENT
You didn’t come see me today.
What’s the latest from your penpal?

Kent peers over the filing cabinets to find Nancy and Teri
sitting in the aisle, surrounded by endless pages of redacted
case files. Not a shred of usable material remains.

NANCY
The printer at the Pentagon have a
hissy fit? What the fuck is this,
Kent?

KENT
I’m responsible for what goes out.
(already walking away)
You got a problem with what comes
in, take it up with the government.

NANCY
(to Teri)
We need Mohamedou’s sign off on a
motion to compel. What does your
weekend look like?

TERI
... Nothing I can’t move.
(rises to leave)
I’ll check the flights to Cuba.

Nancy left alone, surrounded by the redacted files. She eyes
them, coiled, itching for the fight that’s coming.
INT. STUART’S OFFICE - PENTAGON - NIGHT

Stuart at his desk, he scans the un-redacted case files (same as Nancy’s) spread out in front of him. Information overload. Around him, the rest of the JAG TEAM work diligently, equally submerged in stacks of paperwork. Seidel pokes his head in the door --

SEIDEL
Stu? I’m grabbing lunch with Whit Cobb.

Couch nods, barely looks up.

SEIDEL (CONT’D)
He’s gonna ask me for a trial date.

COUCH
(straightens, concerned)
We’re not there yet, sir. We’re still corroborating.

SEIDEL
You have 20,000 pages of evidence. FBI didn’t have that much on Gotti.

COUCH
Technically, it’s not evidence, it’s hearsay. Slahi said this, that, and the other, but we have no idea when he said it or who he said it to.

SEIDEL
We don’t give OGC a date, pretty soon they’ll give us one.

With that, Seidel slips out. Frustrated, Couch stares at the whiteboard, mind turning --

EXT. BETHESDA - NEIL’S HOUSE - DAY

Couch’s 4Runner pulls up outside a quiet home in the Maryland suburbs. A few other cars double-parked in the drive. Couch steps up to the house, six-pack in hand.

INT. NEIL’S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Couch watches a Virginia Tech Hokies game with Neil and a few AGENCY TYPES. From the mood, it’s clear the Virginia Techs are fighting for a win.
NEIL
Why the hell are you running it on third and long? Come on, man.

NEIL’S WIFE pokes her head in --

NEIL’S WIFE
I think something’s burning, Neil,
I can smell it from my office.

NEIL
(jumps up)
Shoot, thanks, hun.

As Neil hustles out of the room, Couch sets aside his untouched beer, follows after him.
INT. NEIL’S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Couch steps in, watches Neil set a large vat of Chili by the window, wafts the smoke outside.

COUCH
Need a hand?

NEIL
Go, go, you’re missing the game.

Couch shuts the kitchen door, wary of eavesdroppers. Neil notices, knows his friend well enough --

NEIL (CONT'D)
Man, don’t tell me you didn’t drive all this way for the fellowship?

COUCH
OSD’s breathing down my neck to charge Slahi, and I’m still fumbling around for a light switch.

NEIL
Tell you what, I’ll swing you an agency liaison for your task force.

COUCH
They won’t have the horsepower.

NEIL
What are you asking for?

COUCH
You’ve been on the inside of these things, how do I get the MFRs?

NEIL
You don’t, Stu.
(off Couch’s look)
Don’t lean on me, man. The raw stuff’s only meant for the intel community, not evidence for trial.

COUCH
That’s where this thing’s headed. And if I show up with 20,000 summaries and not a single piece of ‘put it in the bag’ evidence, Slahi’s gonna walk.

Neil deflates, knows he’s not getting out of this kitchen without giving up something.
NEIL
You know who General Mandel is?
He oversaw the JTF interrogations.
He’s the only person who can sign
off on the MFRs.

COUCH
I have to go down to Gitmo?

NEIL
(walks out, pissed)
Yeah well, the General’s not coming
to you.

EXT. GUANTANAMO CAMP – DAY
An aerial shot with the sea glistening in the distance.

INT. CAMP ECHO – VISITING CELL – MOMENTS LATER
Mohamedou excitedly chows down a mouthful of cheese, rifles
through the bag of food. In between bites --

MOHAMEDOU
Teri, you are like totally perfect.
Where can you even buy caravane?

Invigorated by the bag of treats, Mohamedou bounces around
the room. Notice, his feet are unshackled.

TERI
There’s a Senegalese grocer I found
near DC.

MOHAMEDOU
You have to eat, I can’t alone,
please, here...

He rifles through the bag, finds a thermos. His eyes light
up, he opens the flask, smells the rising steam...

MOHAMEDOU (CONT'D)
Are you serious?
(sips)
Ya salaam. How do you know this?

TERI
‘Lots of sugar, six tablespoons.’
Your mom was very specific.

Mohamedou is stunned. Stops eating.
Mohamedou
You talk with her? What does she say? She’s good?

Teri
She’s good. She told me to tell you your brother, Yahdih? He moved back home. Your niece has a daughter, another baby on the way. If it’s a boy, she’ll name it after you --

Mohamedou
Two children already? Mashallah. (sits, realizing)
How long they are married now?

Before Mohamedou can disappear off the edge of despair --

Nancy
Your letters have been coming through --

Mohamedou
You checked the seals, they were okay?

Nancy
Nothing’s been tampered with.

Mohamedou
You know this, one hundred percent?

Nancy
Yes. And we need you to keep writing, they’ll be invaluable. (getting to the point)
Especially since the government is refusing to disclose the evidence against you --

Mohamedou
Because they have none. I keep writing, you will see, all this time.
(then, aware)
It’s good, my letters? You understand everything?

Teri
They’re great. You should’ve been a writer.
MOHAMEDOU
I will, in the next life. God
Willing
TERI
No, really. Even the Privilege team enjoys reading them --

MOHAMEDOU
Who’s reading? What is Privilege team?

TERI
(coversing)
It’s okay, they’re separate from the prosecution.

MOHAMEDOU
You say to me, attorney-client. You’re attorney, I’m client. What is fucking privilege team?

NANCY
(cuts Teri a look)
They’re an independent body, they evaluate evidence, including your testimony, separate from the prosecution and the government. We have to go through them. I promise you, they don’t share --

MOHAMEDOU
(explodes)
No, you cannot promise me nothing. If my guards read the letters, I am here, it’s me they will fuck.

NANCY
If they leak, it’s grounds to sue. The Government would be in contempt of Court.

MOHAMEDOU
Contempt? What Does this mean to me?

NANCY
We can’t move forward without going through the privilege team. You have to trust me.

Mohamedou simmers, unsure...

NANCY (CONT’D)
You’ve gotta hang with me, Mohamedou. We haven’t even gotten in the ring yet.
Mohamedou doesn’t respond but Nancy takes his silence as agreement.

NANCY (CONT'D)
Good.
(slides him a form)
And I need you to sue the
government.

Mohamedou laughs, the suggestion absurd.

NANCY (CONT'D)
We have to file a motion to compel
so they release the evidence they
have against you. We can’t fight
what we don’t know.

MOHAMEDOU
1,460 days I have been fighting
like this. FOUR YEARS.

NANCY
You want to stay here another four?

MOHAMEDOU
It’s not simple like you say. They
decide where I sleep, when I sleep.
They decide what I eat, where I
eat. I belong to them, my life can
be a lot worse than this.

TERI
What do you mean worse?

MOHAMEDOU
I mean...
(covers)
I mean what I say, there is no
evidence. I trust you, you trust
me. I am innocent. What do you need
to see to believe this?

NANCY
It doesn’t matter what we believe,
it only matters what we can prove.

MOHAMEDOU
You are just like the
interrogators. It reminds me of an
old story from home. There’s a man
who is super scared of chickens,
like always he’s hiding when he
sees them.

(MORE)
MOHAMEDOU (CONT’D)
It is so bad he goes to a psychiatrist. The psychiatrist y’know, he asks ‘why you are afraid of chickens?’ ‘Because the chicken wants to eat me, he thinks I am corn.’ ‘But you are not corn, you are a big man. It would be crazy to think you are corn.’ The man says, ‘I know, that’s why you should be talking to the chickens.’

(then)
You cannot fight for me if you are chickens and all you see is corn too.

Nancy steels over. Refuses to say the words he wants to hear, but Teri --

TERI
Of course we don’t think you’re corn - or chicken, or whatever, right?

Nancy still remains mute.

TERI (CONT’D)
We know you’re innocent but we have to prove it. We can’t do that unless we see the allegations against you. That’s all we’re asking for.

(beat)
But we can’t do our job unless we see the allegations against you. That’s all we’re asking for.

Mohamedou softens, then --

MOHAMEDOU
Who do you want to sue? You say government, but what does it mean?

NANCY
There’ll be three names on the lawsuit: The U.S Government, Donald Rumsfeld, George W. Bush.

Mohamedou sits back, trying to wrap his head around Nancy.

MOHAMEDOU
(shrugs at the absurdity)
... Yes, fuck it, why not, y’know?
EXT. GUANTANAMO BAY - LANDING STRIP - DAY

Hot, exhausted, Nancy and Teri sit on their suitcases, waiting for their plane. Ominious storm clouds sit on the horizon. Something bothering Teri, she eyes Nancy...

TERI
All he wanted to hear is that we believe he’s innocent. Why didn’t you just say it?
NANCY
... Think I miscalculated with the tea, I’m not gonna last three and a half hours. Need anything?

But Nancy’s already crossing the tarmac back towards the D-Fac hut.

INT. D-FAC HUT (DINING FACILITY) - GUANTANAMO - MOMENTS LATER

Half gift shop, half dive bar. Couch peruses the aisles of the small store. Racks of T-shirts, ‘Don’t Feed the Taliban’ and ‘Guantanamo Golf Club’. A TV in the corner tuned to Saddam Hussein’s trial on Fox News.

Couch suddenly NOTICES: Nancy, stepping out of the restroom and perusing the store. He considers for a moment -- then steps over to her.

COUCH
Miss Hollander? I’m Stuart Couch.
(off her confusion)
I’m lead counsel for the government on your client’s case.

NANCY
... Okay.

COUCH
Trust a pilot, those storm clouds won’t clear for a while - your plane won’t be leaving anytime soon...Can I buy you a drink?

Nancy considers for a second --

TIME CUT:

Nancy sits in a window booth. She watches off-duty SOLDIERS catching the last of the days surf outside. Couch slides into the booth with a couple of beers.

COUCH (CONT’D)
I wouldn’t want to post out here, but the R n’ R doesn’t look so bad.

NANCY
... You know one day this will all be a tourist attraction?
(Couch laughs)
I’m not kidding. Cruise ships from the Keys will come and dock.
(MORE)
NANCY (CONT'D)
The crowds will wander in and out of the cells with their daiquiris, trying to wrap their heads around what the hell happened here.

COUCH
What do you think is happening here?

NANCY
I don’t know yet. But it was built beyond the reach of the courts for a reason.

COUCH
You got the world’s second largest minefield to the north. Shark-infested waters to the south. That’s two reasons.

NANCY
(not buying it)
And what’s the reason you’re sitting on the case files?

COUCH
I’m not. We submitted everything for discovery months ago.

NANCY
I received 20,000 pages of redacted materials.

COUCH
Then you should file a motion to compel.

NANCY
That’s what I’m doing.

COUCH
I won’t stand in your way.

NANCY
(skeptical)
You won’t stand in my way?

COUCH
Man, you cranks always think we’re trying to build some sort of lawless garrison-state.
NANCY
We’re drinking beers in a prison gift shop. What else would you call this?

COUCH
The military is founded on rules and order, they won’t let you out of boot-camp if you can’t square a four inch fold on a bedsheet. The law says you get open-file discovery, I want you to have discovery. That way when I beat you, your client has nothing to hide behind.

NANCY
You seem pretty certain of the outcome.

COUCH
You haven’t seen what I’ve seen.

Couch clocks a flicker of doubt in Nancy.

COUCH (CONT'D)
Let me ask you, I understand everybody has a right to a defense, but doesn’t it bother you at all? Working for someone like this?

NANCY
Like what?

COUCH
A terrorist who had a hand in the murder of 3,000 innocent civilians.

NANCY
I’m not just defending him, I’m defending the rule of law.

COUCH
How very Ignatian of you.

Impressed, Nancy reassesses Couch --

NANCY
I didn’t know they studied the Jesuits at Parris island.

COUCH
We like to fully consider a problem before we blow it up.
NANCY
My turn. Let me ask you, what if you’re wrong?

COUCH
We’re not.

NANCY
But what if you are? And you built this place, abandoned all your principles, and your laws, and you were wrong?

Caught off guard, Couch searches for a response...

CAMP INDIA MINDER (O.S.)
Colonel, your transport is ready.

They look up to find the Camp India Minder at the door.

COUCH
Thanks for the coffee.

INT. CAMP INDIA - HALLWAY - DAY

Couch follows a CAMP INDIA MINDER through security doors, he pauses at a library cart stacked with tattered books.

COUCH
What do they like to read?
CAMP INDIA MINDER
If it’s on there, it’s a detainee request.

Couch picks up a copy of ‘The Da Vinci Code’ from the cart.

COUCH
Guess these assholes love religious fiction.

CAMP INDIA MINDER
They go nuts for that stuff. Look.

Camp India Minder shows Couch, the last few pages torn out.

CAMP INDIA MINDER (CONT'D)
We like to mess with them, tear out the last chapter.
(Couch is unimpressed)
Not me. Some of the other guys.

Camp India Minder keeps walking. But Couch pauses to peer inside the viewing slat of a cell door.

CAMP INDIA MINDER (CONT'D)
Your man Slahi was in this block for awhile.

Camp India Minder unlocks the cell door, motions Couch into --

INT. GUANTANAMO - EMPTY CELL - CONTINUOUS

A thin mattress and a blanket the only objects in the small, windowless room. Couch notices --

COUCH
It’s freezing, what do you keep the temperature at?

CAMP INDIA MINDER
AC only goes down to fifty two.

Couch notices eye-bolts in the walls and the floor. They can’t be for anything good. In the distance he can hear a thrash metal song

COUCH
Two types of music I can’t abide: country and heavy metal. And at a pinch I’ll suck it up for country.

The Minder smiles uneasily.
INT. GENERAL MANDEL’S OFFICE – GUANTANAMO – DAY

Couch sits across from GEOFFREY MANDEL (50s). Two stars on his cammo, two ranks above his competence. His office has a view of the sea - through barbed wire.

MANDEL
They take you around India block?

COUCH
Yes, sir. And some of Delta.

MANDEL
India’s where we keep the worst of the worst. But we circulated seven-sixty over to Echo last year. We reward cooperation here.
COUCH
I noticed you keep the temp low and restraints in the walls. What’s that? Sleep depravation?

MANDEL
It’s one of the tools in the box.

Miller shifts, obviously displeased with the insinuation.

COUCH
Defense is gonna play every card they can. If they have grounds to call duress, it’s better I know now.

MANDEL
... Colonel Seidel told me you were a Naval aviator?
(Couch nods)
You went through New Brunswick? The SERE school they run up there?

COUCH
I did.

MANDEL
I take it you didn’t enjoy it?

COUCH
What’s not to enjoy? Three nights in the hole with a bucket to piss in. They pumped chainsaws and crying babies through the speakers round the clock. By the end of training, it got pretty loopy.

MANDEL
Did you confess to shooting Kennedy?

COUCH
(point taken)
I did not, sir.

MANDEL
A couple sleepless nights, that’s all. We pull from the same playbook. You and every other green marine made it out alright, they will too.
COUCH
... I don’t know if the Colonel mentioned why I wanted to see you?

MANDEL
He did and I told him to save you the trip. He said you wouldn’t take no for an answer, but I’m afraid that’s the answer I have. I’m enormously proud of what goes on inside JTF, but my hands are tied, I’m not at liberty to share MFRs.

COUCH
If it’s a clearance issue, sir, I’m TS-SCI --

MANDEL
It’s an agency issue.

COUCH
I was told specifically, you’re the man to see.

MANDEL
(immoveable)
That sounds like something a spook would say, doesn’t it?
INT. COUCH’S CAR – DAY

Kim has picked Couch up from the airport. She looks over at him. Trying to read him.

KIM
How was it?

COUCH
Not what I’d hoped.

KIM
Are you ok?

Couch doesn’t answer. Gazes out of the window.

CIA INTERROGATOR 1 (PRE-LAP)
Where is Mullah Omar?

INT. INTERROGATION HUT – GUANTANAMO – NIGHT – FLASHBACK

A MONTAGE. A series of FBI interrogators question Mohamedou. Some whisper, some shout, some seem angry, other sympathetic. The net result is jump-cut confusion. We don’t see Mohamedou himself until the end of the sequence.

FBI INTERROGATOR 2
Where is Bin Laden?

FBI INTERROGATOR 3
We’re bombing the shit out of your friends in Afghanistan right now. What do you think of that?
FBI INTERROGATOR 4
Did your cousin ask you to recruit for 9/11?

FBI INTERROGATOR 1
Where is Mullah Omar?

FBI INTERROGATOR 3
Give us some names!

FBI INTERROGATOR 2
What do you mean when talk about “tea and Sugar”

FBI INTERROGATOR 4
It’s code isn’t it?

FBI INTERROGATOR 1
Tea and sugar is explosives!

FBI INTERROGATOR 2
Admit it!

FBI INTERROGATOR 1
Look at the photos!

FBI INTERROGATOR 4
Look at them!

Suddenly we recognise the face of an interrogator: it is NEIL BUCKLAND - Couch’s friend.

NEIL
You killed them Mohamedou!

FBI INTERROGATOR 4
You killed them, Mo.

NEIL
You have the blood of 3,000 innocents on your hands Mohamedou.

Now we see Mohamedou: confused, distraught, shaking with fear.

MOHAMEDOU
No. No. It is not true!

EXT. CAMP DELTA - EXERCISE CELL - DAY - FLASHBACK
Still visibly shaken, Mohamedou steps into the familiar patch of dirt. The GUARD slams the gate shut behind him. Mohamedou perks up, noticing the soccer ball in the corner.
MOHAMEDOU
Marseille? You are there?

MARSEILLE
... Yes.

MOHAMEDOU
You are lucky, one of the other bastards would keep your ball.

Mohamedou picks up the ball, hurls it over. But the ball comes right back, bounces into Mohamedou’s cell.

MARSEILLE
I don’t need it.

MOHAMEDOU
They’re moving you?
(off silence)
They’re letting you out?

MARSEILLE
None of us are ever getting out.

MOHAMEDOU
They can’t keep us here forever, *inshallah*. Don’t let them take your faith. One day you will be home.
(off silence)
... Marseille is on the ocean, no?

MARSEILLE
Yes.

MOHAMEDOU
Nouakchott also. When I am home, I will lie in bed, listen to the waves.
(switches to French)
Can you hear them now, Marseille?

Mohamedou closes his eyes, listens... the faint sound of seagulls and the ocean in the distance.

MARSEILLE
The sea always sounds the same.
Nouakchott, Marseille, Guantanamo.
It never fucking changes.

MOHAMEDOU
It’s good. When you hear it, dream of home.
MARSEILLE
But when we’re home, we’ll be
dreaming of here. None of us get to
leave.

Mohamedou lets that sink in...

GUARD 3 (O.S.)
Two-forty-two, let’s go.

The sound of the gate opening in the next cell. Mohamedou
listens as the Guard Shackles Marseille and leads him away.

Mohamedou scrambles to his gate, brings his eyes up to a
small tear in the mesh. He watches through the hole as
MARSEILLE is led back towards the cells.

MOHAMEDOU
Don’t let them break you, brother.

Marseille glances back over his shoulder. It’s the first and
only time Mohamedou sees his face. He’s a young, skinny
French-Algerian. Doesn’t look much older than twenty.

MARSEILLE
See you later, alligator.

As Mohamedou watches his only friend disappear from view --

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INT./EXT. MOHAMEDOU’S NISSAN/STREET - NIGHT - MEMORY

Mohamedou, on the night we met him. As he drives away from
the family home, his eyes are glued to the rear-view:

His Mother stands in the street, counting out Tasbih
(prayers) on her raised right hand. She slowly turns to dust,
a gust of wind blowing her away.

TERI (PRE-LAP)
Who was your friend?

84

OMITTED

84

INT. AIR SUNSHINE PLANE - MOVING - NIGHT

Nancy watches through the airplane window as the lights of
Cuba disappear below them. Teri in the next seat.

NANCY
We need to change the conversation.
TERI
What?

NANCY
If this case is about Mohamedou, we’re going to lose. We need to act strategically.

INT. FBH LAW FIRM – NANCY’S CORNER OFFICE – DAY
Teri leads a WSJ JOURNALIST (40s) into Nancy’s office.

WSJ JOURNALIST
Miss Hollander?
NANCY
Nancy. Have a seat.

He removes his shoulder bag, pulls out a notebook.

WSJ JOURNALIST
Before we start, I should warn you, this won’t be a puff-piece.

NANCY
(unfazed)
Where would you like to start?

WSJ JOURNALIST
People have called you a ‘terrorist lawyer’. How do you respond to that?

NANCY
When I defended someone charged with rape, no one thought I was a rapist. When I defended someone charged with murder, no one dug up my back yard. But when it’s someone accused of terrorism - well, people like you think that’s different. It’s not. When I stand by my client and insist he gets a fair hearing, I’m not just defending him but you and me. The constitution doesn’t have an asterisk at the end saying “terms and conditions apply”.

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INT. STUART’S OFFICE - PENTAGON ANNEXE - DAY

Couch reads the Wall Street Journal behind his desk. The article on Nancy takes a half-page spread.

NAVY JUNIOR ASSOCIATE
See the journal today, sir?

The Navy Junior Associate steps into the office, motions to his copy of the Wall Street Journal. NOTICE the rest of the Junior Associates all read the same article.

COUCH
Yeah.

NAVY JUNIOR ASSOCIATE
Can’t believe she sat down for this, it’s a demolition job.
COUCH
It’s a paradigm shift. Yesterday we were prosecuting a terrorist responsible for 9/11. Now we’re debating the merits of habeas.

Frustrated, Couch tosses the paper aside. He checks his watch, looks around the office...

COUCH (CONT'D)
Where’s Arjun?

INT. PENTAGON ANNEXE - LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER

Couch paces across the lobby, towards: Arjun flanked by two SECURITY GUARDS on the other side of the Security Barrier.

COUCH
What’s going on?

PENTAGON GUARD
He’s not cleared to enter the building.

ARJUN
They pulled my pass.

Couch swipes through the barrier, approaches Arjun.

COUCH
(to Security Guards)
Give us a minute?

The Guards step aside, allowing Couch and Arjun some privacy.

COUCH (CONT'D)
What do you mean they?

ARJUN
I don’t know, someone revoked my clearance and I have orders to return to Lejeune.

COUCH
What did you do?

ARJUN
Nothing, I sent out the information requests you asked for.

COUCH
To who?
ARJUN
Langley, FBI, Interpol, anybody who touched the MFRs.

PENTAGON GUARD
Sir, I’m gonna have to ask your friend to leave, he can’t be here.

ARJUN
(backing away)
I’m going, I’m going.

Couch is seething.

88 EXTERNAL CAMP DELTA - EXERCISE CELL - DAY - FLASHBACK

Mohamedou punts the now faded soccer ball hard against the fence. It bounces back to him. Bored, frustrated, he kicks it again and again, until... The sound of the gate next door --

MOHAMEDOU
Marseille! I listen for your number all week. I thought you move to India block... Marseille?

An OLD MAN’S VOICE responds beyond the partition wall. He shouts back in Dari, Mohamedou has no idea what he’s saying.

89 EXTERNAL CAMP DELTA - PATHWAY - DAY - FLASHBACK

Mohamedou is being lead back to his cell. One of the guards is STEVE - the guy who laughed at Mohamedou’s parrot joke.

MOHAMEDOU
... I can ask you something? My friend, his number is two forty-two, I don’t see him for a long time, you know where he is?

STEVE
I can’t talk about other detainees.

MOHAMEDOU
What happened to him?
(no response)
Please, he has a wife, children.

They stop at a gate. Waiting for it to be unlocked.

STEVE
... Two forty-two was found dead in his cell last month.
MOHAMEDOU
Dead? From what?

STEVE
Self asphyxiation.

Mohamedou stops in his tracks, takes in the news. All Steve can do is lay a comforting hand on Mohamedou’s shoulder.

STEVE (CONT'D)
Sorry, bro. It’s a bad deal.

They start walking again past a temporary hole in the sniper screen - perhaps the wind has blown it away. Mohamedou turns his head to look at the sea for an instant before the sniper screen starts again and the view disappears.

Pre-lap: The call to prayer.

89A INT. MOHAMEDOU’S CELL - CAMP DELTA - DAY

Mohamedou stands in his cell and recites the Muslim Funeral Prayer, firmly but solemnly.

MOHAMEDOU
"O God, forgive our living and our dead, those who are present among us and those who are absent, our young and our old, our males and our females. O God, whoever You keep alive, keep him alive in Islam, and whoever You cause to die, cause him to die with faith.

Slowly we hear other voices joining in - other prisoners further down the corridor.

89B INT. CORRIDOR - DELTA BLOCK - DAY - CONTINUOUS

We drift down the corridor, hearing the prayer coming from every cell. Each voice conjures an individual. One sounds old and broken; the next sounds like he is little more than a boy.

The GUARDS stand silhouetted at the end of the corridor, impassive.
Mohamedou, now TWENTY-ONE, hair and beard long. He looks every bit the Mujahid as he grips a tripod-mounted DHsK heavy machine gun. Exhilarated, he fires a burst of rounds into a broke-down pick up truck. Target practice.

Behind him, a group of other MUJAHIDEEN TRAINEES cheer him on. Amongst them, NOTICE KARIM, cheering the loudest

COURTHOUSE PROTESTERS (PRE-LAP)
Remember 9/11! Remember 9/11!

EXT. DISTRICT COURT OF COLUMBIA - DAY

Nancy and Teri shove through a small crowd of PROTESTERS on the courthouse steps --

COURTHOUSE PROTESTERS
Remember 9/11! Remember 9/11!

In the push and shove, one of the Protestors bumps Teri, she stumbles back, rattled. Nancy grabs her, pulls her through the angry cluster --
INT. DISTRICT COURT OF COLUMBIA - ENTRANCE HALL - DAY

The Protestors kept at bay outside. Nancy and Teri step past the SECURITY GUARDS and into the large chamber. NOTICE a large portrait of George Bush Jnr. Nancy smooths over her suit, notices Teri trembling.

NANCY
You okay?

TERI
... Yeah.

NANCY
We can’t ask for an adjournment.

TERI
I know, I’ll be fine.

INT. DISTRICT COURT OF COLUMBIA - COURTROOM - DAY

Nancy addresses the JUDGE from the lectern.

NANCY
... If the government has ‘uniquely complicated’ issues clearing classified evidence, the issues are of its own making, your Honor. Mr. Slahi has been spirited across borders, interrogated and held against his will since 2001, without a single charge laid against him. The Supreme Court said it will not tolerate further delay when it ordered these cases to proceed. The government has had plenty of time.

Nancy steps back from the lectern. The Judge looks up from his papers, eyes the JAG LAWYERS on the opposite bench.

JUDGE
Thank you, Miss Hollander.
(to JAG Lawyers)
Mr. Patton?

Nancy takes a seat next to Teri as the Government Lawyer steps up to the lectern -- she glances around, as though missing somebody. Teri notices.
GOVERNMENT LAWYER (PATTON)
Your honor, the government does not object to the defense’s right to disclosure. But clearing classified evidence is an extremely time consuming process. Mr Slahi is a self-admitted member of al-Qaeda; his case is in fact uniquely complicated. We simply need more time.

JUDGE
The government has ten days to file or it will find itself back in my courtroom.

Nancy and Teri look to each other, flooded with relief. But then a puzzled expression passes over Teri’s face as she looks around the courtroom, catching up with Nancy.

TERI
Why isn’t Couch here?

NANCY
(already figured it out)
Telling us he doesn’t think this is a big deal.

Nancy is unreadable but Teri looks concerned.

INT. CRYSTAL CITY - SECURE ROOM – DAY

Kent flicks on the lights, revealing boxes and boxes of documents in Nancy and Teri’s secure room.

KENT
Well, you asked for it. Happy reading.

The women stare at the boxes. Nancy is first to reach for a box – the label reads “President Bush v Mohamedou Slahi”.

TIME CUT:

NIGHT. Nancy struggles to stay awake, takes notes as she flips through a file. On her notepad, NOTICE a few phrases:

Tasked by Al-Qaeda... Well-known to German intelligence...
Member of Hamburg Cell... Recruited for Jihad in Europe...
NANCY
Shit - his best friend in Germany, Karim Mehdi, was arrested two years ago for planning to blow up a French holiday resort. He sold Mohamedou down the river to the French authorities. He says: “Slahi was the one who radicalised me..”

But Teri is barely listening - she’s found her own bombshell.

TERI
Fuck. Fuuuuck.

Nancy turns to Teri, who stares at a case file in disbelief.

TERI (CONT'D)
He confessed.

NANCY
To what?

TERI
Everything. Financing for 9/11, recruiting the hijackers. Christ, he wrote a spreadsheet on the inner workings of Al Qaeda. Why didn’t he tell us he confessed?

It takes Nancy a moment to cover her shock - but only a moment.

NANCY
It’s not the first time in history a client’s lied to their lawyers.

TERI
Look at all this.
(spinning out)
Look at this one. He admits to acquiring explosives to blow up LAX. The Millenium plot?

NANCY
What’s your point?

TERI
He’s guilty. He’s fucking guilty.

NANCY
He still has a right to counsel.
TERI
I’m not saying he doesn’t, but he
helped kill 3,000 civilians and
we’re doing everything we can to
get him out.

NANCY
We’re doing our job.

TERI
I did fucking bake sales for his
legal fund. That’s not my job. My
Dad told me I’m not welcome at
thanksgiving this year. That’s not
part of the job.

A switch turns in Nancy, she goes back to her work.

NANCY
Then get out.

TERI
... What?

Nancy doesn’t look up from her work, Teri already amputated
from her mind.

NANCY
You want turkey and pumpkin pie
with Mom, Dad and Uncle Joe? Get
out, go home. You can’t win a case
if you don’t believe your own shit.

TERI
I’m not trying to leave, I’m just --

NANCY
You’re wasting my time. Go.

Teri struggles to hide her shock. But she’s invisible to
Nancy now. Teri gathers her things, leaves. Only when Teri
slams the door, does Nancy stop.

She glances at the endless stacks of paperwork, it’s
exhausting being this alone. Nancy picks up the file Teri was
reading, eyes it with trepidation...

94A INT. COUCH’S CAR – DAY 94A

Couch drives alone. Lost in thought
INT. NANCY'S CONDO - ALBUQUERQUE - NIGHT

Nancy steps in, rolling her suitcase behind her. Exhausted from her trip, she flips on the lights.
She takes in her empty home. Her life is still half packed in moving boxes. The walls still empty. This must be the loneliest place on earth.

MOHAMEDOU (PRELAP)
What is this?

OMITTED

INT. INTERROGATION HUT - GUANTANAMO - DAY - FLASHBACK

Mohamedou sits across from Santiago and Poulson. Santiago pushes forwards a pastry box.

SANTIAGO
It’s our goodbye party.

Mohamedou opens the box, a Filipino coconut cake inside.

MOHAMEDOU
Who is going home? Me or you?

SANTIAGO
Military Intelligence think we’re wasting our time. They’re gonna take over, see if they can’t get you to cooperate.

MOHAMEDOU
But I tell you everything.

POULSON
Not according to Ramzi bin al-Shibh. Last chance, Mohamedou.

Poulson slides a photo of a Binalshibh to Mohamedou.

MOHAMEDOU
No more with this bullshit. A friend from my Masjid is telling me, his friend needs a place to stay. I like to help, my house is open. I let this guy stay, one night. Next that I hear about him, he is telling CIA all kinds of crazy intels about me.

SANTIAGO
Look, bud, you’re tired of saying it and we’re tired of hearing it.

(MORE)
SANTIAGO (CONT'D)
Military want a crack at you, that’s what’s gonna happen.

POULSON
You should know, once MI take over, your next sessions will not be as friendly as these have been.

MOHAMEDOU
No tea, no cakes?

Santiago eyes Mohamedou with pity, knows what’s coming next.

SANTIAGO
Good luck, Mo. All I can tell you is be truthful.

Santiago and Poulson shake Mohamedou’s hand and leave. They are immediately replaced by 3 guards.

GUARD 4
Hold your hands out.

Mohamedou complies. One of the guards pulls out a special tool, takes hold of Mohamedou’s hand and removes the GREEN ID BRACELET that he’s had on since he arrived.

GUARD 4 (CONT'D)
You won’t be needing this where you’re going.

With a swift motion another guard grabs Mohamedou’s precious EXERCISE BOOK with his English words in it and rips it up.

MOHAMEDOU
What are you doing?! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!

The guards put BLACK-OUT GOGGLES on him and man-handle him out of the cell while Mohamedou struggles and shouts.

EXT. GUANTANAMO PATHWAYS – NIGHT – FLASHBACK
Mohamedou struggles as guards half lead, half drag him down the pathway.

INT. CAMP ECHO – CELL – NIGHT – FLASHBACK
A GUARD ushers Mohamedou into a cell, removes his black out goggles. Mohamedou squints from the bright fluorescent lights. He takes in the room.
MOHAMEDOU
This is not my cell.

ECHO GUARD
It is now. Welcome to ECHO block.

The Echo Guard slams the door shut behind him.

MOHAMEDOU
Where is my Quran? Hey!

Panic rising, Mohamedou pounds on the cell door --

MOHAMEDOU (CONT'D)
It’s too cold. Hey, I freeze in here! Hey, listen to me!

EXT. GUANTANAMO MAIN GATE - DAY

The MILITARY ESCORT blankly stares ahead as he guides Nancy through the familiar gate.

INT. CAMP ECHO - VISITING CELL - DAY

Nancy steps in, Mohamedou is surprised when the door closes behind her. No Teri. Intermittently throughout the scene there is a flickering light behind Mohamedou. It bothers him.

MOHAMEDOU
Where’s Teri?

NANCY
She moved on.

MOHAMEDOU
What? Teri was fun, now I’m stuck with only you... She doesn’t want to be a lawyer no more?

NANCY
She moved on from your case.
(off his confusion)
We won our motion to compel. The government has given us all the evidence they have against you.

MOHAMEDOU
That’s what we’ve been waiting for, right?
NANCY
Evidence including your confessions.

MOHAMEDOU
... But they’re nothing, like fantasy. None of that happened.

NANCY
You signed them.

MOHAMEDOU
You don’t listen, they made me. I told them what they want to hear.

NANCY
Made you as in they coerced you?

MOHAMEDOU
What do you think?

NANCY
I don’t know, tell me.

MOHAMEDOU
You ask me to set fire to this place, but y’know, I am still sitting in it.

NANCY
Then write it down. That’s what the pages are for.
   (off his silence)
You need to tell me what happened, or I can’t defend you --

MOHAMEDOU
I don’t need to tell you nothing. Whatever I say, it doesn’t matter, I never leave this fucking island. Outside, my brother, my family, their lives go ON Teri’s life goes ON. But here, me, I am like a statue. And one day you leave too, and your life will go ON

NANCY
My life? You don’t want to know about my life.
   (MORE)
NANCY (CONT'D)
The wardens at eight separate penitentiaries send me Christmas cards, okay? If I walk into a courthouse, chances are the bailiffs know me by name. I’m down three marriages and I was on the wrong side of every one of them. I was a bad mother to my only son. It’s hard to love someone who was never there. Because I’m here, I’m always here. This is my life. So don’t question my commitment to your case.

MOHAMEDOU
You’re not committed to me. My case! My case! You think I’m guilty. Say it.
(off her silence)
If you honestly believe it, that I did these things, why the fuck are you here? Really, explain to me. Your three husbands, your son, you give up those things to sit with such an evil guy like me.

NANCY
Everybody has a right to counsel.

Mohamedou’s shakes his head in disbelief.

MOHAMEDOU
You’re so fucked up.

NANCY
Tell me the truth. Write it down.
If you can do that, I’ll be back.
If not... I can find you another lawyer.

Nancy steps away from the table, bangs on the door --

NANCY (CONT'D)
I’m ready.

EXT. GUANTANAMO BAY – BUS PICKUP POINT – DAY

Nancy stands alone with the Military Escort. The Jamaican driver pulls up in the school bus. As the door opens we hear a Christmas song play from his tape deck.

JAMAICAN DRIVER
Merry Christmas, Nancy.
NANCY
... You too, Theo.

The only passenger, Nancy glances back at the prison as they drive off.

102
INT. MILITARY COLLEAGUE’S HOUSE – LIVING ROOM – NIGHT

Couch moves through a crowded Christmas party. The living room packed with off-duty MILITARY TYPES. Maybe for the first time in his life he feels on the outside of things.

He approaches Kim (his wife) locked in a conversation with the HOSTESS and Neil’s Wife (HANNAH).

COUCH
Hey Hannah, I didn’t know you guys were coming.

HANNAH
Nearly didn’t, i-83’s closed north of Baltimore.

HOSTESS
I’m glad you made it in one piece.

HANNAH
Neil thought he was back at flight school the way he was driving those country roads.

COUCH
Where is Neil? I haven’t seen him.

HANNAH
He’s around somewhere.

Couch looks around for Neil.

103
EXT. MILITARY COLLEAGUE’S HOUSE – BACK GARDEN – NIGHT

Couch steps out to find Neil sneaking a cigarette.

NEIL
How’s it going, Stu?

COUCH
Glad I caught you. It’s been a fruitless endeavor trying to get through to your office.
NEIL
What can I tell you, it’s been busy.

COUCH
You can tell me why you sent me on a goose chase to Gitmo.

NEIL
It’s a party, man, enjoy yourself.

COUCH
Why are you dorking me around? I know the Agency pulled Arjun off my task force.
(off Neil’s look)
I’ve never been part of a conspiracy, but I’m starting to wonder if this is what it feels like to be on the outside of one.

NEIL
What are you accusing me of?

COUCH
Hell, I don’t even know, nobody will show me anything. Without the MFRs, my case is a bust.

NEIL
You’re overthinking this.

COUCH
My charge is to get Slahi the needle. No one else is sending him there, not you, not POTUS, that’s on me. And if I’m wrong, when I come to my reward, I’m the one that’ll have to answer for it.

NEIL
Who’s gonna answer for Bruce?

COUCH
Don’t bring him into this --
NEIL
No, you don’t know what we know. Flight United one seventy-five, based on evidence gathered from the wreckage, the first thing the hijackers did was slash one of the stewardesses to elicit the co-pilot – Bruce – to open the cockpit door and come to her rescue. Then they slit his throat with a box-cutter. He bled out on the flight deck as the plane hit the tower. Someone has to answer for that.

COUCH
Someone. Not anyone.

NEIL
Happy fucking holidays.

Neil shoves past him. Couch stays out in the cold, watches through the window as Neil re-joins the warmth of the party.

INT. FBH CAR PARK – NANCY’S CAR – DAY

Nancy drives into the FBH office parking structure, a call on loudspeaker --

EMMANUEL (THROUGH PHONE)
... I talked to everyone, DGSC, DRM, Diplomatie, they don’t know about your man from Marseille.

NANCY
Maybe he’s not French. Algerian?

EMMANUEL
Yes, our firm has contacts in Algiers. SIS say all their nationals in Guantanamo are accounted for. There is no record of two-four-two.

NANCY
So where’d he go?

EMMANUEL
Bof, maybe he doesn’t go anywhere, maybe he doesn’t exist.

The thought of that troubles Nancy...
INT. FBH LAW FIRM – CONFERENCE ROOM – DAY

The partner meeting already in full swing. Nancy steps in late, blanks Teri as she shuffles past the Associates --

JOHN
... Susan’s still missing expense reports for the close of the year. If you haven’t submitted, make sure you get them in by Friday.
(as Nancy takes her seat)
That includes any mystery flights you might’ve taken to Cuba.
(Nancy nods)
Friday, please.

DAVID
Any updates on Slahi?

NANCY
The government material we received is substantial. I’m currently working through it alone.

JOHN
We can’t afford another body on this. It’s already cost us clients; Fleetwood retail went to RBSA because they didn’t like the 9/11 connection. The Journal profile didn’t help.

DAVID
(ignores John)
Are we winding up or winding down?

NANCY
... I don’t know.

INT. NANCY’S PARKED BMW – STREET – NIGHT

It is raining torrentially. The BMW parked in an empty lot. Some drunken xmas party revelers pass by under umbrellas.

Lost in thought, Nancy sits behind the wheel, chows down on a cheeseburger.

Her blackberry buzzes on the passenger seat. One notification; an e-mail from the Privilege Team.
INT. STUART’S OFFICE - PENTAGON - NIGHT

Late, everyone else has gone home. Lame Christmas decorations still up. Couch works alone in his office, lit by the glow of his laptop. Sensing something, he looks up to find Neil standing in the doorway.

NEIL
Don’t say anything. Step outside.

Couch doesn’t ask, follows Neil out to --

INT. PENTAGON - ELEVATOR HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Empty at this hour.

NEIL
The week Slahi transferred to Military intelligence, FBI’s general counsel sent an email warning agents to stay away.

COUCH
Tell me you put a stop to it.

NEIL
We were ordered off the island.

It’s not what Couch asked and Neil knows it.

NEIL (CONT'D)
No, I didn’t put a stop to it.

A beat between them.

Neil motions to an MI CLERK standing by an elevator.

NEIL (CONT'D)
That’s Bob, he’s from inside the building. He’ll take you where you need to go.

COUCH
Thanks.
(as Neil walks away)
Hey, what gives?

NEIL
... I don’t know, man. It all looks different on the way back.

Neil keeps walking. The MI Clerk steps up --
MI CLERK
Sir, if you’ll follow me.

They step into an elevator and the doors shut.

INT. PENTAGON – SCIF – NIGHT

The MI Clerk scans Couch into a small anti-chamber.

MI CLERK
I need your phone and any other electronic devices.

Couch hands over his blackberry. The MI Clerk then scans the door to the SCIF (SENSITIVE COMPARTMENTALIZED INFORMATION FACILITY – a fully secure workspace built within the Pentagon for viewing highly classified intelligence).
MI CLERK (CONT'D)
I’ll be waiting out here, sir.

The deadbolt in the door locks behind Couch as he steps into the small, secure room. Stacks of CIA files marked ‘TOP SECRET’ fill the windowless vault.

Couch pulls a file from the nearest box, takes a seat in the lone chair. And he reads.

INT. MOHAMEDOU’S CO-OP CELL, CAMP ECHO - DAY - PRESENT (2008)

Mohamedou settles down to write his account. We can see that this is hard for him...but soon he is lost in writing. His face is a torrent of emotions.

Some time LATER: We see him seal the pages in an envelope and pass them to a guard.

INT. CRYSTAL CITY - SECURE ROOM - NIGHT

A sealed envelope sits on the desk - Nancy tears it open:

Mohamedou’s handwritten pages. Nancy slumps down, reading.

A whisper fills the silence. Unintelligible at first, but soon the voice takes shape into words. A repeated mantra: Let the bodies hit the floor... Let the bodies hit the floor...

INT. CAMP ECHO - MOHAMEDOU’S CELL - UNKNOWN TIME - FLASHBACK

LET THE BODIES HIT THE FLOOR! LET THE BODIES HIT THE FLOOR!

Exhausted, in agony, Mohamedou half stands, his shackles chained to the eye-bolt in the cell floor. A stress position. Drowning Pool’s Nu-Metal anthem is pumped into the cell on full blast, strobe lights assault his eyes.

 Barely able to stay on his feet, Mohamedou utters a crisis prayer under his breath --

    ECHO GUARD (O.S)
    Stop with the fucking praying!

A GUARD storms in the room, wearing an LOUNGE SINGER mask --

    LOUNGE SINGER
    I told you, I don’t wanna see you fucking praying motherfucker.
-- LOUNGE SINGER kicks out Mohamedou’s knee, he slams hard to the floor, almost a relief, but he’s yanked up to his feet by --

WILDCAT
What you doing down there? Get up.

Mohamedou rises to face...

A FEMALE GUARD in a WILDCAT mask. REALIZE time has passed, Mohamedou has clearly not slept in days. Wildcat helps Mohamedou return to the stress position --

MOHAMEDOU
It hurts, my back, my sciatica --

WILD CAT
The Doctor told us all about it, he said you’re fine. You have to drink now, here.

She forces a red jerry can of water onto Mohamedou.

MOHAMEDOU
Please, I need to sleep.

WILD CAT
You cooperate, you sleep. Now drink.

She tips the water down his throat, he chokes, too exhausted to swallow.

WILDCAT
You ready to tell us about your friends now? You wanna talk about Binalshibh? About Karim? Marwan?

As she continues to list names, Mohamedou struggles to keep his eyes open. Exhaustion taking over, his eyes shut --

EXT. MAURITANIAN DESERT – NIGHT – MEMORY

-- His eyes snap open.

Mohamedou is now TEN. His father is shaking him awake in his family tent.

MOHAMEDOU’S FATHER
No sleeping! If you want to be a bedouin, you have to ride at night.
As they get the camel’s ready Mohamedou’s father sings his hida. His soothing voice calms him, 10 year-old Mohamedou’s eyes drift shut --

MALE VOICE
WAKE UP! WAKE THE FUCK UP!

113  INT. CAMP ECHO - MOHAMEDOU’S CELL - UNKNOWN TIME - FLASHBACK

-- Mohamedou’s eyes snap open. He’s back in his strobe lit cell. His head is gripped by another GUARD, this time in a CYRANO mask. CYRANO screams in his face --

PINONOCCHIO
Don’t you dare sleep on me! We’re stronger than you, we have more people, we’ll fucking break you. Reservation, motherfucker.

He drags Mohamedou out of his cell, shoves him into --

114  INT. SLAHI HOME - WEDDING TENT - NIGHT - MEMORY

-- Mohamedou now moves through the jubilant crowd at his Niece’s wedding. The WOMEN dance to the band. All the MEN jostle to talk to Mohamedou --

MALE WEDDING GUEST #1
Did you tell them about my nephew? The Americans would like him, he’s very smart, like you.

MALE WEDDING GUEST #2
Tell them about Yahdih! He would love to come visit you.

Among the guests, Mohamedou notices a few MEN in orange jumpsuits, black bags over their heads.

115  INT. CAMP ECHO - MOHAMEDOU’S CELL - UNKNOWN TIME - FLASHBACK

Mohamedou is now dumped into a chair by CYRANO. The relief on his weakened body is palpable.

REVEAL he now sits across the table from --

CAPTAIN COLLINS
My name’s Captain Collins, I work for the Department of Defense. We’ve been trying for some time to move you to special projects.

(MORE)
CAPTAIN COLLINS (CONT'D)
Your detention here required top-level sign offs. That means we will extract information from you, do you understand?

MOHAMEDOU
How many days I have been special projects?

CAPTAIN COLLINS
Can you read English?

Mohamedou nods, Collins slides an official document in front of him. His eyes struggle with the words --

CAPTAIN COLLINS (CONT'D)
Since you have refused to cooperate, the US government is authorized to arrest your mother and bring her to this facility.

MOHAMEDOU
My mother? She has done nothing--

CAPTAIN COLLINS
You can save her. But you have to decide, do you want to be a defendant or a witness?

MOHAMEDOU
I can’t be a witness, I have nothing to tell you.

Collins eyes Mohamedou, disappointed. The impasse broken by the chime of a doorbell.

CAPTAIN COLLINS
You’re expecting someone?

MOHAMEDOU
I don’t know.

CAPTAIN COLLINS
Maybe it’s your friend, answer it.

Mohamedou doesn’t question the world in front of him anymore. He steps away from the table. NOTICE, his shackles are now removed. He drifts to the cell door, opens it to reveal --

INT. DUISBURG - MOHAMEDOU’S APARTMENT - NIGHT - MEMORY

-- RAMZI BIN AL-SHIBH on the other side. REALIZE Mohamedou is now in his Duisburg apartment.
RAMZI
Mohamedou?

MOHAMEDOU
You must be Ramzi? Come in.

The two men embrace with the traditional three kisses. Mohamedou leads Ramzi into the living room, motions to the rolled up sleeping bag on the sofa --

MOHAMEDOU (CONT'D)
Make yourself comfortable.
(motions)
The kitchen is through there if you want tea, food, help yourself. The bathroom is on the left. Forgive me, I have to work early in the morning. Knock if you need anything.

As Mohamedou heads towards his bedroom --

SANTIAGO (O.S.)
That’s it? That’s what happened?

REVEAL Santiago and Poulson watching from a dining table behind the sofa. A half eaten coconut cake on the table.

RAMZI
These are your friends?

MOHAMEDOU
There has been confusion. But now we can all clear it up.

RAMZI
Actually, we talked until very late, all night. Mohamedou was very passionate, he recruited me to Al Qaeda. Without him, no way 9/11 would have ever happened.

MOHAMEDOU
No, no, that’s not true --

POULSON
Hey, Mohamedou, have some cake.

MOHAMEDOU
I’m not hungry.

POULSON
Eat. There’s nothing wrong with me.
Mohamedou eyes Poulson, confused.

POULSON (CONT'D)
Two, nothing wrong with me. THREE, NOTHING WRONG WITH ME --

Poulson lunges forwards, forces a fist full of cake into Mohamedou’s mouth --

INT. MOHAMEDOU’S CELL - CAMP ECHO - FLASHBACK

-- LOUNGE SINGER force feeds Mohamedou cold MRE rations. A thrash metal song blasts on the cell speakers;

   LOUNGE SINGER
   (shouts over music)
   Eat when I say eat, shit when I say shit. We’re going to do this every day, until you admit what you are.
   (Mohamedou chokes, weak)
   Stay standing. Do not fucking sit down on me, asshole --

-- Unable to take anymore, Mohamedou chokes. He collapses, retching up the cold rations --

   WILDCAT
   Hey. Sit up, sit up, you’re okay.

Mohamedou is lifted off the ground, he sits up --

INT. MOHAMEDOU’S CELL - CAMP ECHO - FLASHBACK

Mohamedou lies on the ground. He tries to focus his mind. All he can see are the holes in the wire mesh that makes up his cell. He starts to count them. Tracing his fingers across the mesh.. We see his lips move, his eyes scan...

   MOHAMEDOU
   (to himself)
   4,100...4,100 holes...4,100

INT. GUANTANAMO INTERROGATION HUT - FLASHBACK

-- He now sits alone in a room with Wildcat. She is stripped to her underwear.

Time has passed in the blink of an eye. Hardcore pornographic images plaster the wall. Mohamedou takes in his surroundings, convinced he’s losing his mind.
WILDCAT
Why don’t you talk to me, honey? I can make your life so much better.
I think we should be friends, don’t you want to be friends with me?

Wildcat straddles Mohamedou, wraps her arms around him.

MOHAMEDOU
What, what are you doing?

WILDCAT
It’s okay, I’m authorized.

MOHAMEDOU
Don’t let them make you do this.

Wildcat strokes the inside of Mohamedou’s leg, grabs his crotch. Mohamedou jerks back, shocked.

WILDCAT
Doesn’t it feel good?

Mohamedou disappears into his thoughts. He compulsively writes on his leg with his finger as he mutters a crisis prayer under his breath.

WILDCAT (CONT’D)
You’re praying? You shouldn’t be thinking about God, you should be thinking about how wet I am right now...

Wildcat moans into Mohamedou’s ear, grips his hair --

MOHAMEDOU
(like a prayer)
4,100...4,100...4,100 holes...

INT. DUISBURG APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT - MEMORY

-- Mohamedou now makes love to Wafa in his German apartment. She moans in his ear, grips his hair.

WAFA
I want a baby, why can’t you give me a baby?

Mohamedou stops, mortified. Wafa flips him over, as she lands on top of him --

-- REALIZE Wildcat now straddles Mohamedou.
WILDCAT
Why can’t you give me a baby? All I want is a fucking baby --

Horrified, Mohamedou struggles to squirm free, but Wildcat pins his wrists, slams him back onto the mattress --

Mohamedou tries to reach Wildcat, to connect with her:

MOHAMEDOU
Why are you doing this to yourself?

We see the eyes behind the Wildcat mask take this in - A moment of humanity.

INT. CAMP ECHO - MOHAMEDOU’S CELL - FLASHBACK

Close on an Iguana staring at camera malevolently.

-- LOUNGE SINGER tightens the shackles on Mohamedou’s wrists, strings him up to an eye-bolt in the wall of his cell. Mohamedou takes in his surroundings. He sees a ghostly orange-clad female figure strung up opposite him. When the figure lifts her head we see that it is MOHAMEDOU’S MOTHER.

MOHAMEDOU
Mama? Is that you? Are you real?
I’m so happy to see you.

INT. GUANTANAMO INTERROGATION HUT - FLASHBACK

-- REALIZE Mohamedou is now sitting across from Wildcat. They look at each other.

WILDCAT
Don’t you want to go home? If you talk, I can help get you out.

MOHAMEDOU
... I’m going to die here.

WILDCAT
English, say it in English. What did you just say?

MOHAMEDOU
How many days now I have been special projects?

WILDCAT
Not days. Months, Mohamedou.
As Mohamedou wraps his head around that -- Wildcat PEELS HER MASK OFF, revealing that she is an ordinary blond woman. Nothing sadistic about her. Pretty even.

WILDCAT (CONT'D)
We need this to stop, Mohamedou. You need to tell us what you know. Please.

Mohamedou is strangely affected by this. A tear comes to his eye. But just then: The door swings open. CYRANO storms in, followed by two GUARDS, clad head to toe in black. One of the Guards holds a growling German Shepherd tight on a leash, he sets it on Mohamedou --

PINONOCCHIO
Motherfucker, you’re gone.

CYRANO cold clocks Mohamedou in the face, he collapses to the floor. His nose bursts with blood.

WILDCAT
This is my session, who told you to do this?

CYRANO and the Guards ignore her, descend on Mohamedou. They kick him in the face and ribs. The loud barks of the German Shepherd right in his ear --

WILDCAT (CONT'D)
Stop it! Stop it!

CYRANO
Blindfold, get him out of here.

A Guard pulls a bag over Mohamedou’s head, yanks him up --

EXT. ANOTHER INTERROGATION CELL – DAY – FLASHBACK

A dripping wet black hood is removed from Mohamedou’s head. He sits, shaking, soaking wet, opposite “Captain Collins”.

CAPTAIN COLLINS
Your mother has been detained, Mohamedou.

Collins now crouches down next to Mohamedou. Intimate. Mohamedou’s face completely battered. Lips and eyes swollen, dried blood cakes his nose.

CAPTAIN COLLINS (CONT'D)
Her transfer to Guantanamo has been approved.

(MORE)
CAPTAIN COLLINS (CONT'D)
This is your last chance to cooperate.

(then, grave)
I gotta tell you, I have concerns about her safety in this all-male environment.

Collins walks away, leaving Mohamedou shattered in his chair.

INT. PENTAGON - SCIF - MORNING

Couch, exhausted, surrounded by open files. He’s been reading all night.

Shell-shocked, Couch sets the documents aside. His mind racing.

MOMENTS LATER. Couch steps out of the SCIF to find the MI Clerk fast asleep in the Ante-room. He retrieves his cell phone and heads down the hallway.

INT. SECURE ROOM - CRYSTAL CITY - NIGHT

Nancy reads the final lines of Mohamedou’s letter, her face etched with pain.

She puts the letter down. Fights back her emotions.

INT. CRYSTAL CITY - SECURE ROOM CORRIDOR/OFFICE - NIGHT

Fire in her belly, Nancy marches down the corridor, Mohamedou’s letters gripped tight in her hand.

No one else here at this hour. Nancy pokes her head into Kent’s office to find Kent watching racing on his small, handheld TV.

NANCY
How soon can you clear these?

Nancy thrusts the pages onto Kent’s desk.

KENT
Is that Mo? What’s the news from Cuba?

NANCY
These pages... they put my client in a vulnerable position. They need to be handled with sensitivity.
Kent eyes the pages, intrigued.

127

**EXT. FALLS CHURCH - DAY**

Couch, Kim and their kids walk up the front path towards the beautiful old church. They say hello to friends and family who are there to attend a Baptism.

128

**INT. FALLS CHURCH - DAY**

Kim takes Stuart’s hand as the CONGREGATION stands. Couch can see Cathy seated ahead of them. They catch each other’s eye for a moment.

PRIEST
The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.

CONGREGATION
And also with you.

MOHAMEDOU (PRE-LAP; ARABIC)
In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful. Praise be to Allah, Lord of the Worlds...

129

**INTERCUT: INT. CAMP ECHO - MOHAMEDOU’S CELL - NIGHT**

Mohamedou has positioned his battered body to pray:

MOHAMEDOU
(Arabic/translated)
Master of the Day of Judgment, show us the straight path; Not the path of those who earn Thine anger nor of those who go astray...

Falls CHURCH: The Baptism service continues:

PRIEST
Will you persevere in resisting evil, and whenever you fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord?

STUART/CONGREGATION
I will, with God’s help.

He glances at Cathy, next to Kim...
MOHAMEDOU’S CELL: His prayers continue:

MOHAMEDOU
Allah, Most Gracious, Most
Merciful. I cannot find my way on
my own. Please guide me. I am
surrounded by merciless wolves, who
fear not thee.

He breaks down sobbing.

Falls CHURCH: The Baptism service continues.

PRIEST
Will you do everything in your
power to seek justice on earth and
treat every human being with
inherent human dignity?

This lands powerfully with Stuart, a moment of reckoning for
his soul.

STUART/CONGREGATION
I will, with God’s help.

MOHAMEDOU’S CELL: He’s sitting up, his expression not unlike
Stuart’s, both at a crossroads.

MOHAMEDOU
Sir?

A GUARD enters (his face obscured by a MASK).

MOHAMEDOU (CONT’D)
I would like to speak with Captain
Collins. (beat) Please tell him I
would like to confess.

INT. CAMP ECHO – MOHAMEDOU’S CELL – UNKNOWN TIME – FLASHBACK

Mohamedou, ghostly pale and thin wears a clean white uniform.
He chows down on McDonalds, trying to look grateful.

Across from him, Captain Collins flips through stacks of
Mohamedou’s signed statements.

CAPTAIN COLLINS
I much prefer these civilized
conversations. I’m very happy with
your cooperation, Mohamedou. But I
think you’ve only provided 85% of
what you know. I’m sure you’ll
provide the rest.
MOHAMEDOU
(alarmed)
Yes, yes, Of course.

CAPTAIN COLLINS
Here, I brought you something.

Collins pulls out something from a bag. A small pillow.

MOHAMEDOU
Now I can sleep.

CAPTAIN COLLINS
Yes, now you can sleep.
Collins pats Mohamedou on the back as he steps out of the cell. Left alone, Mohamedou regurgitates the fast food he is chewing. He gets up, slowly, painfully, and flushes the food.

**EXT. PENTAGON – SOUTH PARKING LOT – NIGHT**

Seidel walks towards his CADILLAC ATS, he hits the unlock button when a voice behind him calls out:

**COUCH (O.S.)**

Sir.

Seidel turns around to see Couch standing there - his face stoney.

**SEIDEL**

Is this an inside in the warm issue, or a standing out in the cold issue?

**COUCH**

We can’t prosecute Slahi, we don’t have the evidence.

**SEIDEL**

He gave you multiple signed confessions, how much more could you need?

**COUCH**

They were given under duress, sir. Fruit of the poisonous tree. He spent seventy days in special projects, tortured. Nothing he said will be admissible.

**SEIDEL**

That’s what they’re trained to say. AQ laid it all out in the Manchester Protocol. The second you are detained, claim torture.

**COUCH**

This isn’t coming from AQ, this is coming from our side.

(moves closer)

I read the MFRs. This guy, Kevin Wilder, some Navy reservist, Chicago PD thug, he ran the program. Sleep deprivation, water-boarding, stress-positions, flat out assault.

(MORE)
COUCH (CONT'D)
Wilder created a fictitious alter-ego Captain Collins and as such personally threatened to have Slahi’s mother shipped to Gitmo to be raped by other detainees.
(disbelief)
And it’s all documented, it’s systemic, OSD approved. Rumsfeld’s signature is on the top-sheet. The whole well’s poisoned, not a single one of these cases will stand up in court. Nor should they. What’s been done here is reprehensible.

SEIDEL
I don’t want to hear any more about detainee treatment. Our interrogator are doing a tough job under pressure to prevent second 9/11. Your job is to bring charges – let a judge decide what’s admissible.

COUCH
I refuse to prosecute this case, sir. As a Christian, as a lawyer –

Seidel looks at him cold and hard.

SEIDEL
- what makes you think you’re so much better than the rest of us?

COUCH
I’m not better than anyone else. We all took an oath to support and defend the constitution and at the very least we’re miles away from that.

Seidel opens his car door, turning to Couch as he gets in:

SEIDEL
You’re a traitor.

COUCH
I’m trying to do the right thing.

Couch stands there, quaking with anger as Seidel drives off.
Kent reads Mohamedou’s pages, clearly disturbed. He perks up as another PRIVILEGE TEAM MEMBER steps in --
KENT
Go get coffee, let me finish this.
(off his confusion)
I said, go, now.

The Privilege Team member shuffles out. Kent returns to reading Mohamedou’s pages...

INT. FBH LAW FIRM - ADMIN OFFICE - DAY

The Fax Machine chugs out a scan of Mohamedou’s diary. The CLERK tears off the printout.

INT. FBH LAW FIRM - BULLPEN - MOMENTS LATER

Teri watches with interest as the Clerk paces across the office - now sprinkled with cheap Christmas decorations - and sets the folder down in Slahi’s sealed war room. As the Clerk steps out, Teri intercepts her at the door --

TERI
Are those new pages from Mohamedou?

CLERK
Nancy told me not to talk about it.

TERI
(peers past her)
Where is she?

CLERK
She told me not to talk about it.

INT./EXT. SCHOOL BUS - MOVING - DAY

Nancy rides the bus with the usual hodgepodge of LAWYERS. The Jamaican driver bobs his head to Jimmy Buffet on the speakers. But Nancy’s eyes are locked on:

A red jerry can strapped to the front of the bus. The same type used to waterboard Mohamedou.

INT. CAMP ECHO - VISITING CELL - DAY

Mohamedou sits with Nancy. She quietly sets out her pens and note pad. He’s confused by her strange formality. The outer (solid) door to the cell has been left open. The sunlight comes in through the metal mesh.
NANCY
So, I received your correspondence, I think there are strong grounds to make the government’s evidence against you inadmissible --

MOHAMEDOU
Then you are still my lawyer?

NANCY
Very much so.
(then)
That being said, even with all the help we’re getting from the ACLU, we have an uphill struggle. It’s now clear to me why the administration is dragging it’s feet on a court date. One strategy to consider is releasing your correspondence.

MOHAMEDOU
To a newspaper?

NANCY
Or maybe a book. The court of public opinion might be the only one you get.

Nancy perks up at the sound of the Adhan (call to prayer).

NANCY (CONT’D)
Do you need me to step outside?

MOHAMEDOU
We can keep going.

NANCY
You don’t want to pray?

MOHAMEDOU
Why do you care? You are religious now?

NANCY
I don’t. I care about you.

Mohamedou eyes her with suspicion.

MOHAMEDOU
What do you need me to sign Nancy? Who am I suing today? God?
NANCY
No one today.

MOHAMEDOU
Then why you are here?

NANCY
No reason in particular, I just didn’t want you to be alone.

Mohamedou takes comfort in that. The two of them, alone, together in this place.

INT. COUCH’S HOME - OFFICE - NIGHT

Couch peers through his window, watches as a car pulls into his driveway below. The driver obscured from his view.

Tense, Couch listens as the doorbell chimes. Kim greets the visitor at the door. Footsteps as she leads him upstairs.

KIM (O.S.)
He’s right through there, let me know if you need anything.

Couch takes a breath, braces himself as the door opens... The WSJ JOURNALIST steps into his office.

WSJ JOURNALIST
Colonel Couch, thanks for agreeing to the interview.

COUCH
Call me Stu, have a seat.

Couch watches, anxious, as the WSJ Journalist sits down, takes out his pen, notepad, and recorder...

INT. COUCH’S OFFICE - PENTAGON - DAY

Couch clears his desk, the framed photo of Bruce Taylor’s funeral the last piece in the box. He avoids the gawks of his Junior legal team. They all have a copy of the Wall Street Journal with Couch’s picture on the front page.

INT. PENTAGON - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Couch steps out. Seidel glares at him from down the hall. Couch holds Seidel’s glare and then nods defiantly to his colleagues as he leaves.
INT. TRUCK-STOP DINER - DAY

An 'outside of the beltway' greasy spoon. Nancy is seated with a beer, watching the door. She sees a man walk in and waves: Couch walks over and sits (signaling to the SERVER he'll have a beer, too).

NANCY
Thanks for schlepping all the way out here.

COUCH
Not a problem - I'm not really a welcome presence most places inside the beltway.

A smile.

NANCY
I wanted to say thank you. You did the right thing.

COUCH
My Christmas list just got a little shorter, that's for sure.

NANCY
Can't be shorter than mine.

The server brings his beer.

COUCH
But I think God pays for what he orders; one way or another, he'll make it work out.

Nancy stares at this strange creature opposite her.

NANCY
You really believe that?

COUCH
I do.

They each take a slug of beer.

NANCY
You know, I think I figured out why they built the camp down there. We were both wrong. It wasn't the detainees they wanted to keep out of the courts, it was the jailers. My client's not a suspect, he's a witness.
Couch looks at her for a moment.

COUCH
Did you ever look in box 32?

Nancy is puzzled.

COUCH (CONT'D)
The factual return. Box 32. It’s labelled “Translations” but there’s something in there you might want to see.
They both take another swig.

COUCH (CONT'D)
When’s your court date?

NANCY
Couple of weeks.

COUCH
Judge Robertson’s a tough judge. Convince him, you’ve convinced me.
(a beat)
But don’t get me wrong. If there is untainted evidence showing Slahi’s guilty, I’ll stick the needle in his arm myself.

NANCY
I’d expect nothing less.

141 INT. FBH LAW FIRM – BULLPEN – MORNING

Teri crosses the office, still sipping her morning Starbucks. She steps into her cubicle, pauses, noticing:

A manila envelope on her desk. She opens it and we see her face lighten.

142 INT. FBH LAW FIRM – SLAHI’S ‘WAR ROOM’ – MOMENTS LATER

Nancy scans through legal papers. A knock at the door --

NANCY
It’s open.

Teri steps in, manila envelope in hand --

TERI
He passed the polygraph. Twice. “No sign of deception”

NANCY
Won’t stand up in court... but yeah. Nice to know.

Nancy looks up, Teri still awkwardly standing at the door.

Teri also holds a photo. It shows a young Arab man with his wife and child. A posed portrait. She hands it to Nancy.

NANCY (CONT'D)
Who is that?
TERI
That’s Marseilles. The IRC helped me find him. I spoke to Samia, his wife.

Nancy looks at the man in the photo – he’s hardly more than a boy.

Teri moves towards the door –

NANCY
What are you doing? Come in, close the door. We’ve got a lot to do.
That’s about as much reconciliation as she’ll offer. But it’s enough for Teri, she steps in, closes the door behind her.
Nancy and Teri pass through the metal detector. NOTICE President Obama’s official photo overlooking the hall.

SUPER: District Court of Columbia, August, 2009.

COURTROOM DEPUTY (PRE-LAP)
This is civil action 05-569, Mohamedou Slahi vs Barack Obama...

Nancy and Teri occupy one bench, the NAVY JUNIOR ASSOCIATE and a couple of other JAG OFFICERS on the other. Behind them, a row of anonymous MEN IN SUITS. Intelligence officers.

COURTROOM DEPUTY
Nancy Hollander and Theresa Duncan
with the ACLU represent the petitioner, Joseph Folio and Rodney Patton represent the respondents.

The COURTROOM DEPUTY addresses the court as JUDGE ROBERTSON (70) prepares his notes. NOTICE the courtroom is sealed, the benches largely empty.

JUDGE ROBERTSON
Good morning everybody. Before we start here, I’d like to ask the government counsel to please explain this very impressive array of gentlemen sitting around the periphery of my courtroom.

NAVY JUNIOR ASSOCIATE
(nervous)
Your Honor, they are representatives, here to... during the session, inform us when we are switching between declass and classified modes, Your Honor.

JUDGE ROBERTSON
Can the government counsel explain who or what they are representing?

NAVY JUNIOR ASSOCIATE
I’m unable to divulge that, your Honor.
NANCY
They’re all called Bob, and they
work in communications.

Nancy’s joke gets a laugh from Judge Roberts, but the Men In
Suits remain stone-faced.

JUDGE ROBERTSON
Alright. Now, our proceedings here
should be viewable by the
petitioner. Has this all been
explained to him?

NOTICE a TV set in the corner of the room. Mohamedou’s
pixilated face on the screen.

TERI
Only informally, in the last few
minutes before you came in...

INT. CAMP DELTA - MOHAMEDOU’S CELL - CONTINUOUS

Anxious, Mohamedou sits in front of a TV screen, the court
proceedings playing via video link. Currently, there’s audio,
but no video. Steve the guard fiddles with the cable --

MOHAMEDOU
You don’t know what you’re doing,
let me help.

GUARD/STEVE
Chill, Mo, I think I got it.

TERI (THROUGH TV)
... We did explain there would be
times where we would be muted, so
he doesn’t think it’s a mistake.

Frustrated, Mohamedou reaches around the back of the TV set.

MOHAMEDOU
I know how to fix this, it’s what I
do for work. Trust me.

Camp Six Guard steps aside, Mohamedou switches around a few
cables... A moment later, the video feed turns on. A blurry
image of the courtroom appears on the screen.

JUDGE ROBERTSON (THROUGH TV)
Good morning to Guantanamo. I’m
Judge Robertson.

(MORE)
JUDGE ROBERTSON (THROUGH TV) (CONT'D)
We’ve had some preliminary
discussions of the procedures we’ll
follow today. Does the petitioner
have any questions?

MOHAMEDOU
He is asking me? I am the
petitioner?

JUDGE ROBERTSON (THROUGH TV)
What’s he saying? I can’t hear him.
Open that line a little wider.

A flurry of activity in the courtroom as BAILIFFS futz with the technology.

MOHAMEDOU
He can’t hear me? It all works
here, why can’t they hear me?
(panic rising)
Can you hear me? Can you hear me?

JUDGE ROBERTSON (THROUGH TV)
That’s it, we got him.

MOHAMEDOU
You hear me? Can you hear me now?

JUDGE ROBERTSON (THROUGH TV)
Yes, we’re getting you.

MOHAMEDOU
No joking, everyone can hear me?

NANCY (THROUGH TV)
We can all hear you, Mohamedou.

MOHAMEDOU
You are certain? You can hear me?

NANCY (THROUGH TV)
Don’t worry, everyone can hear you.

The simple idea that his voice will be heard startles Mohamedou. NOTICE he nervously traces prayers into his thigh.

On the TV, the banal bureaucracies of the court continue, but we STAY on Mohamedou.

JUDGE ROBERTSON (THROUGH TV)
Now, do counsel anticipate opening
statements?
NAVY JUNIOR ASSOCIATE (THROUGH TV)
Yes, Your Honor.

JUDGE ROBERTSON (THROUGH TV)
And will the Bobs determine them to be classified of unclassified?

NAVY JUNIOR ASSOCIATE (THROUGH TV)
There’ll be at least one classified, Your Honor...

Mohamedou’s eyes remain wide and alert. But as his fate is decided in a courtroom 1300 miles way, the anguish of eight years imprisonment finally catches up to him. He struggles to hold it together.

JUDGE ROBERTSON (THROUGH TV)
Is the detainee going to testify?
He understands he doesn’t have to?

NANCY
Yes, your Honor. He wants to. He’s fighting for his life and he has nothing to hide.

COURTROOM DEPUTY
Mr Slahi, would you please raise your right hand and repeat after me.

Mohamedou raises his hand.

COURTROOM DEPUTY (CONT'D)
I

MOHAMEDOU
I

COURTROOM DEPUTY
State your name

MOHAMEDOU
State your name.

The entire court has a burst of giggles. Mohamedou becomes even more nervous.

COURTROOM DEPUTY
Say your name.

MOHAMEDOU
Mohamedou Ould Slahi.
COURTROOM DEPUTY
I solemnly swear to tell the truth,
the whole truth and nothing but the
truth

MOHAMEDOU
I solemnly swear to tell the truth,
the whole truth and nothing but the
truth.

JUDGE ROBERTSON
Go ahead, detainee.

MOHAMEDOU
Thank you, your honor.

(then)
Where I come from, we know not to
trust the police. We know the law
is corrupt and the government uses
fear to control us.

(MORE)
MOHAMEDOU (CONT’D)

But then I moved to Germany as a teenager, for the first time I experienced living where people don’t fear the police. Where they believe the law protects them. For me, and for so many people in the world, America is like this. Even in Mauritania we have watched ‘Law and Order’ and Ally McBeal! And when I first arrive at Guantanamo, I was happy – because I trusted in American Justice. Never did I believe I would be eight years a prisoner without trial. That the United States would use fear and terror to control me. All my time here I have been told: “You are guilty.” Not for what I have done, or what has been proved, but because of suspicions and association. (Beat)
Forgiveness is part of my religion. But if you have a problem with the United States, you will have that problem forever. My captors will not forgive me for something I have never done. But I am trying to forgive. I want to forgive, because that is what Allah wants.
(Beat)
For this reason, I do not hold a grudge against those who abused me. In Arabic, the word for “free” and “forgiveness” is the same. And this is how, even here I can be free.
(Beat)
For eight years, I have dreamed about being in a courtroom. Now that I am here, really I am scared to death. But I hope I can find peace, because I believe this court is guided by law, not fear. So I can accept whatever you decide, Your Honor. May God forgive us.

EXT. GUANTANAMO PATHWAY – SOME WEEKS LATER – DAY

Nancy and Teri walk towards the regular interview room accompanied by a MILITARY ESCORT. They turn as though to enter the hut –
MILITARY ESCORT
You’re not in there today, Maam.
You’ve been cleared to visit 760 in
his own cell.

Surprised, Nancy and Teri walk on.
MILITARY ESCORT (CONT'D)
(conspiratorially)
We’re all praying he gets out of here.

Nancy is struck by the simple decency of this soldier.

INT. MOHAMEDOU’S CO-OP CELL – CAMP ECHO – DAY

This is where Mohamedou has been housed ever since he “co-operated” – separate from the other detainees. Out front he has a little patch of earth that he has turned into a garden. The cell itself is relatively spacious by Guantanamo standards, the shelves are stacked with books and dvds). There is a Biblical quotation tacked to the wall: What profits a man if he gains the whole world but loses his soul?

Nancy and Terry step in to find Mohamedou already on his feet, arms wide open --

MOHAMEDOU
My lawyers!

He wraps them both in a massive hug.

MOHAMEDOU (CONT'D)
When I am back in Mauritania, you will come to my house, I will show you off to everyone in Nouakchott, ‘I know the best lawyers in the fucking world’

TERI
I look forward to it.

Nancy sits down, already back to work --

NANCY
In the meantime, we need to prepare for the Government’s appeal --

MOHAMEDOU
What can they appeal? We won.

NANCY
They’re gonna jam this in the courts, but we’ll be ready --

MOHAMEDOU
Wait, how long is this?
TERI
We can’t say for sure.

MOHAMEDOU
You knew already they would do this?

TERI
The government’s a sore loser. Obama was embarrassed by some of the coverage in the US press which called him “soft on terrorists”.

MOHAMEDOU
But why you don’t tell me?

NANCY
We can only fight what’s in front of us.

MOHAMEDOU
This whole place is in front of me, around me, everywhere. How long until I go home?

NANCY
... We don’t know. But we’ll be here as long as it takes.

Mohamedou is crushed - but as he looks from Nancy to Teri he knows that they will do everything they can for him.

CUT TO BLACK.

CARDS OVER BLACK

I remained in custody and never saw my mother again. She died in 2013.

Nancy and Teri were as good as their word, they visited me on alternate months for over a decade.

In 2015, a redacted version of my letters to my lawyers was published with the title “Guantanamo Diary”. The book brought public attention to my case.

I was finally released on October 17th 2016, having spent 14 years and two months in prison.

I was never charged with any crime.
INT. TRANSFER CELL - GUANTÁNAMO - NIGHT

Wide awake, Mohamedou sits in the dark. The sound of boots outside his door.

    GUARD SIX
    Seven-sixty, are you ready?

He puts his hands through the BIN HOLE; they’re shackled.

EXT. GUANTANAMO AIRFIELD - NIGHT

 Guards walk Mohamedou across the floodlit airstrip. A TRANSPORT TEAM stand at attention outside a C-17 military plane, engines roaring and ready to go.

    SUPER: October 17th, 2016.
    
    GUARD SIX
    Ready?

    MOHAMEDOU
    (nods)
    See you later, alligator.

Guard 6 pulls earmuffs and blackout goggles over Mohamedou’s head.

Mohamedou is marched into the giant mouth of the empty C-17.

Except for his breath, everything goes silent, everything goes black.

END WITH real footage of Mohamedou returning to Mauritania, re-uniting with his family - and meeting Nancy and Steve - the guard from Guantanamo.

CARDS OVER BLACK

Mohamedou married Kitty, an American lawyer in 2018. They have a son, Ahmed [real photograph] 

Theresa “Teri” Duncan continues to practice criminal law, specialising in death penalty cases. [real photograph] 

Stuart Couch retired from the Marine Corps and now works for the Department of Justice. [real photograph] 

Nancy Hollander is still working. Her clients include one of the men still held in Guantanamo, and whistle-blower Chelsea Manning.[real Photograph]